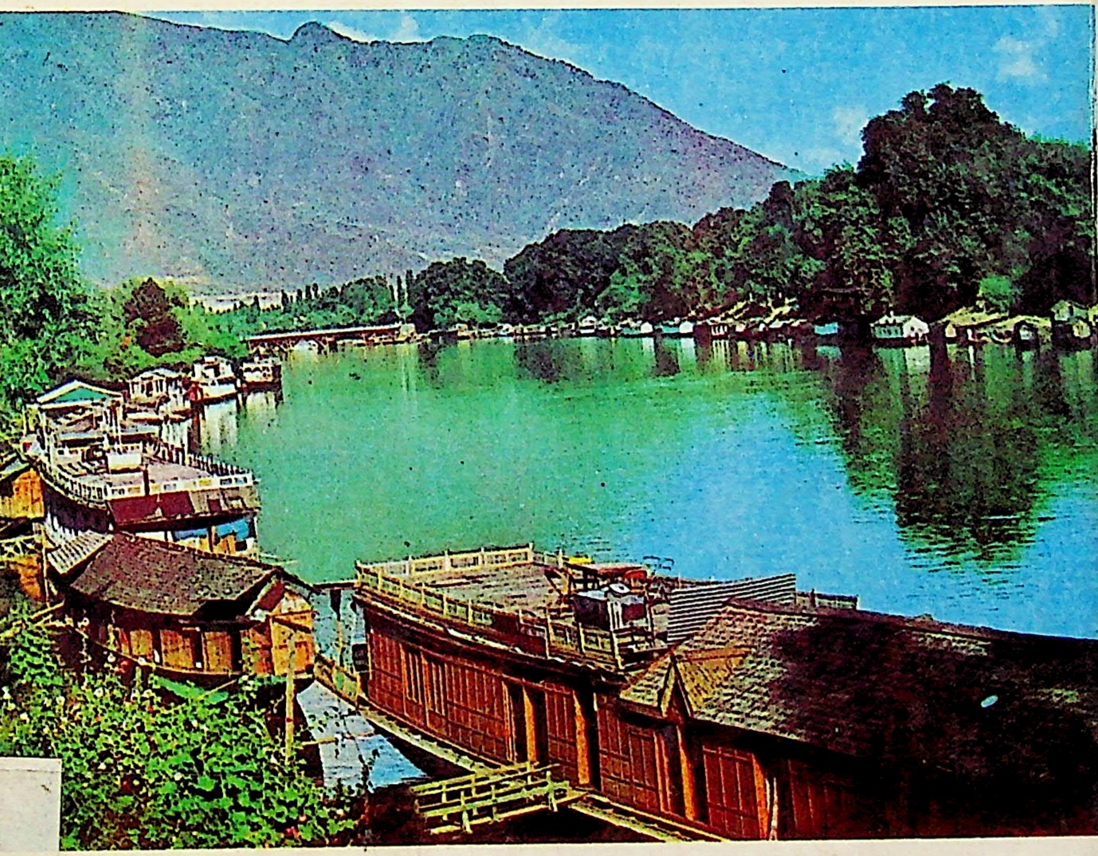
CULTURE AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF KASHMIR

Volume 3
Modern Kashmir



P.N.K. Bamzai

ABOUT THE BOOK

The number of books written on Kashmir is legion. Most of them deal with the natural beauty of this "Paradise on Earth". However, little has been written on the people whose life and history are equally interesting for they have given to humanity thought and craft that added to its dignity, elegance and colour.

Kashmir has the unique distinction of having a long tradition of historical records, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* being the sole history in Sanskrit literature. But these records follow the usual mode of presenting a list of kings, queens and their ministers or an account of their expeditions to neighbouring principalities. There is hardly any mention of the people who inhabit the land.

But in recent years the study of history has undergone a sea change. A book written on the old pattern which would barely mention Asoka the Great or Lalitaditya and his ephemeral empire would be as incomplete as those which ignore the social setting of political and intellectual history.

This book has been written with the object of giving a comprehensive story of Kashmir revolving round the common man's political, social and cultural life from prehistoric times to the present day.

Situated in a sensitive geo-political region where recently terrorism has raised its ugly head, Kashmir has attracted world attention. The genesis of this malady has been dealt with in detail. It is hoped the book will help the reader to understand the situation with all its ramifications.

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MODERN KASHMIR

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UNDER THE SIKHS

[1819 — 1846]

THE DOGRA REGIME

[1846 — 1947]

IN FREE INDIA

[1947 and After]

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KASHMIR UNDER THE SIKHS

The dawn of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of Kashmir as a vital frontier region of India. The fame of its scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage had already spread to distant corners of the world, but with the rapid advance of the British Indian empire to the north; the amazing growth of power and expansion of Tzarist Russia in Asia; and the extension of the Chinese borders to Sinkiang, Kashmir acquired a unique importance as the place where the three great empires met. Soon it became a centre of activity of various foreign agents engaged in collecting information on its geography, administrative set-up and defence. With the advance of the century, the course of Kashmir history was increasingly affected by the political situation prevailing on both sides of the Karakoram, as well as by the relations existing between the British Indian Government and Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. To the misfortune of the people of the State these and similar international developments — the concomitants of its geographical situation — persisted to influence the course of political history of Kashmir even after it was incorporated in the Sikh kingdom or later when it became a princely State of British India. They have certainly not ceased to do so even to the present day.

Kashmir's Strategic Importance

The first realisation of Kashmir's strategic importance dawned on the British Indian Government after the conclusion of a treaty of friendship with Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Amritsar in 1809, by which they agreed to abstain from any interference with the territories of the Maharaja north of the Sutlej, while he agreed to respect the territories and subjects of the chiefs south of the river. The Maharaja honourably observed his engagements and abandoning his dream of Cis-Sutlej supremacy, turned his attention to the expulsion of the

Afghans from the northern districts of the Punjab, and the reduction of Multan, Kashmir and the Derajat. After suffering two reverses in 1812 and 1814, he finally wrested the Valley out of the hands of the Afghans in 1819. During his continuous hostilities with Afghanistan and other smaller principalities, till his death in 1839, he valued Kashmir not only for its rich yield of revenues, but also for its strategic position which facilitated the numerous expansionist campaigns that he undertook.

Meanwhile the British who, out of fear of the Russian advance into Central Asia and Persia, were getting interested in the northern region of Ranjit Singh's dominions, began casting their covetous eyes on the beautiful Valley. Hence we find a number of British nationals penetrating into Kashmir and adjoining areas to extend the British sphere of influence there. Some of them like Moorcraft, fomented trouble for Ranjit Singh in Ladakh and other frontier regions.

In order to follow the confusing course of events of the time, it will be convenient to give here a brief account of the rise of the Sikh power in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and his relations with the British in the south, and Afghanistan in the north of the Indian subcontinent.

The Sikh Gurus

The Sikhs, originally a religious sect, were hammered into a military power by their conflict with the Mughals and later with the Afghans. Guru Nanak, the founder of the religion, was born in the year 1649 at a village called Talwandi on the bank of the Ravi near Lahore. His life except for his being religious-minded from his childhood, had been uneventful and the influence he left behind was enshrined in his writings which were subsequently collected. The word *Sikh*, literally learners, disciples, was given to his followers by Guru Nanak himself and as the creed spread, it became the title of the whole sect.

Guru Nanak, passing over his two sons, named his disciple, Guru Angad, as his successor. The fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, collected the writings of the founder and this, together with extracts from the works of popular saints and poets recorded in the Punjabi dialect came to be known as the *Adi Granth*.

It was, however, in consequence of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, that the purely religious sect of the Sikhs was transformed into a militant force by his son, the great Guru Govind

Singh. The circumstances leading to Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, have been given in detail by Bhai Gyan Singh Gyani in his *Guru Khalsa Twarikh.*

Iftikar Khan, a Governor of Aurangzeb, was using force to convert the Pandits in Kashmir to Islam. Some pious men among the Pandits then met and decided to go to Amarnath and invoke the mercy of Siva there for deliverance from the tyrannies of this bigot. At the Amarnath Cave one of the Pandits saw Lord Siva in a dream Who told him to go to Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Sikh Guru, in the Punjab and ask for his help to save the Hindu religion. He spoke to his companions about this revelation. About 500 Pandits proceeded to Anandpur Sahib where Guru Teg Bahadur was living. They told him about the atrocities committed on them by Aurangzeb's governor, Iftikar Khan, in Kashmir. The Guru was deeply touched on hearing the details, and was in a sorry and pensive mood. At that time his son, Govind Singh, who was then a child of 14 years of age and was playing outside, came to him. He saw a crowd of Pandits sitting there in distress and his father mute as a fish. He asked his father why he looked pensive. Guru Tegh Bahadur, pointing towards the Pandits, told his son mournfully that the Hindus were being forced to renounce their religion and that, he thought, they could be protected if some holy man offered himself to be sacrificed for them. Guru Govind Singh, with folded hands, said to him — "Father, who else is a holier man, fit for being sacrificed than yourself for saving the Hindu religion no?" Guru Tegh Bahadur replied — "I have absolutely no hesitation in giving my head but I am grieving that as you are still a child, who would take care of you after me." Guru Govind Singh replied earnestly, "Almighty God would take care of me." Guru Tegh Bahadur was pleased to hear this courageous answer from his worthy son and then advised the crowd of Pandits to go to Aurangzeb and tell him straightaway that they, together with all the Brahmins in Kashmir, were quite ready to embrace Islam if Tegh Bahadur, who was the Chief Guru of the Hindus would first be converted. The Pandits went to Nawab Zalim Khan, the then governor of Lahore, and presented to him their petition which had been dictated by Guru Tegh Bahadur. The governor gladly endorsed it and gave it back to the Pandits to be presented to the emperor at Delhi. He gave them all necessary help for reaching that place safely. They went and presented the petition to Aurangzeb. The emperor was highly gratified to read it and called the qazis and moulvis in Durbar and joyfully announced the contents of the petition to them.

Of course, they all received the tidings with acclamation. He told the Pandits that he cheerfully accepted the condition laid. He sent them back to Kashmir, making suitable arrangements for their return journey. He wrote to Iftikar Khan, governor of Kashmir, to desist from forcible proselytising, for, he was now satisfied that no more force was needed for attaining the object in view.

Aurangzeb sent a letter by an official to Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur, inviting him to come to Delhi. Before the imperial officer reached him, the Guru, accompanied by five attendants, started for Agra on 11th Har, 1732 (25 June 1675 AD). At Agra he was arrested by the Kotwal there and sent to the emperor at Delhi. His five attendants went with him, reaching Delhi on 1st Maghar, 1732 (15 November 1675 AD). He had an interview with the emperor. The latter pressingly solicited him to embrace Islam. The Guru had words with him, roaring emphatically that he spurned the idea. The emperor, wrinkled his brows and ferociously ordered the executioner to take the Guru to a place to be beheaded there. While being taken to the place of execution the guru quietly told one of his five attendants, Bhai Jita, that, after he was beheaded, he should take away his head to Guru Govind Singh. On 13th Maghar, 1732 (27 November 1675 AD), Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded. Bhai Jita stealthily took away his head. When he neared Anandpur, Guru Govind Singh went forth to meet him and, bowing reverently, received his father's head. In the turban bound round the head was found a paper with the following ennobling words written thereon:— *Sar-i-khud dadam magar sir-i-Khuda na dadam*, meaning that he had given his head but not God's secret (that is religion). The head which wore the glorious crown of martyrdom, was duly cremated. Guru Govind Singh, being intensely grieved at the ferocity of Aurangzeb in killing his innocent father, took a solemn vow to avenge his death by taking to arms and embarking on a crusade to free the country from the rule of the Mughals.

The Sikhs Become a Military Power.

Being yet only a boy of 15 years, Guru Govind Singh fled to the hills where he completed his education. He mastered Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. At the same time, not neglecting the accomplishments of a well-born youth of his age, he became a keen sportsman and skilled in all feats of arms. When he emerged from seclusion he was at once accepted by the Sikhs as their natural and hereditary leader, and they were quite ready to follow him to avenge the murder of

his father. Assured of the support and loyalty of his followers, Guru Govind Singh began to preach the new doctrine boldly which was that the Sikhs should follow a political creed and unite into a military community. With this object in view he compiled the scriptures, adapting these to suit his own doctrine. His object was not, however, to overturn or indeed to modify in any important particulars the doctrine bequethed by Guru Nanak, but to produce a work which should kindle in his followers a patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit.

He and his followers soon clashed with the forces of the Mughal emperor, who captured his two sons. The children were taken to Sirhind and there, "by order of the emperor Aurangzeb, were buried alive". But this tragedy did not dampen the spirit of the Guru who continued to give fight to the forces of the decaying Mughal empire. His life was cut short at the age of 48 by an assassin in 1708 AD.

Guru Govind Singh had announced to his disciples that he was the last of the prophets. At his death the Sikhs had become a formidable force, organised into a proud, ambitious and warlike people, possessed of a common faith, fully armed and equipped for victory. With nothing but their faith, their brave heart and their swords, they were engaged in a brave struggle with the mighty Mughal empire.

The history of the Sikhs from the death of Guru Govind Singh to the birth of Ranjit singh, a period of 72 years, is of great and varied interest, and includes the invasions of Nadir Shah, of Ahmad Shah Abdali, and the gradual decline and disintegration of the Mughal empire, whose governors and lieutenants threw off the authority of the emperors and declared themselves independent.

The military successor of Guru Govind Singh was Banda Bairagi, who on more than one occasion defeated the imperial troops and ravaged the country of the Bari Doab. He was, however, captured in 1716 and put to death. The invasion of Nadir Shah and his conquest of Delhi and plunder of the city so weakened the Mughal government that the Sikhs took heart and again prepared for battle. They attacked and scattered detachments of Nadir Shah's army, or later plundered the baggage of Ahmad Shah Abdali who invaded the Punjab in 1747. The horsemanship, frugal habits, and rapidity of movement of the Sikhs made them formidable opponents and although they received constant and severe defeats from the better armed Muhammadan troops, they never lost heart and only dispersed to reappear again in increasing numbers.

Sikh Misls or Confederacies

Ahmad Shah invaded India year after year, but quickly lost the provinces he conquered. On each occasion he had to reckon with the Sikhs, who ever gained confidence and power and were forming themselves into *misls* or confederacies, in which a number of chiefs agreed, after a somewhat democratic and equal fashion, to follow the flag and fight under the general orders of one powerful leader. This organisation made them more formidable, and the several chiefs building their forts in convenient places gradually overran the whole of the Punjab, shutting up the Muhammadan governors of Abdali in their forts of Sirhind, Dinanagar and Lahore.

It was in 1761-62, that the Sikhs abandoning their strategy of guerrilla warfare, made a stand against a regular army. The Sikhs who had assembled near Barnala in Patiala were surprised, surrounded and compelled to give battle by the army of Ahmad Shah Abdali, and were defeated with the loss of 20,000 men and many prisoners. But no sooner had Ahmad Shah returned to Kabul than the Sikhs regained courage and the combined confederacies attacked and defeated his governor at Sirhind of which they took immediate possession. Ahmad Shah who returned the following year made no attempt to recover Sirhind and assigned the district to a Sikh chieftain on payment of an annual tribute.

Thus the Sikhs, both by their victory and defeat acquired a status which they did not possess before but once the common enemy was overcome, the *misls* resisted all attempts at dictation by one central authority, until Maharaja Ranjit Singh broke down opposition and reduced rivals and enemies to a common obedience.

The Sikh *misls* were 12 in number, namely, Phulkian, Ahluwalia, Bhangi, Kanheya, Ramgarhia, Singhpuria, Krora Singhia, Nishania, Sukarchakia, Dulelwala, Nakkaia, and Shahids. These *misls* or confederacies were functioning under their respective leaders who held the districts and carried on a semblance of administration over them. But their composition was always changing and their possession passed from one hand to another very rapidly. When they had no common enemy to face, they fought against one anther, and their internecine war was only ended by Maharaja Ranjit Singh who under his strong hand turned the Khalsa into a formidable force and built up a strong kingdom for himself.

Rise of Ranjit Singh

Born in 1780 he was destined to lead an active and adventurous life from his boyhood. His father, Mahan Singh, the enterprising leader of the Sukarchakia *misl* had succeeded to the command of the confederacy at his father's death in 1773 when he was only a boy of 12. In 1774, Mahan Singh married Raj Kaur, the daughter of the Raja of Jind, who six years later gave birth to Ranjit Singh. Mahan Singh during his brief career of 27 years was constantly at war with his neighbours and rivals.

Although Ranjit Singh was only 12 years old when his father died in 1792, he had already accompanied him on expeditions. His prospects at his father's death would have been very unfavourable had it not been for his mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, who was not only a woman of great ability, but had succeeded as the widow and heiress of Sardar Gurbaksh Singh, to the head of the Kanheya *misl.* Taking full command of the forces of the two confederacies into her hands, this remarkable lady resolved to break the power of all her rivals. Ranjit Singh, however, asserted his authority soon and fortunately for him, a special opportunity for distinction arose when Shah Zaman, the grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali, marched into northern Punjab to recover, if possible, his ancestor's lost provinces. In 1797-98 Zaman occupied Lahore without any serious opposition from the Sikhs, who pursuing their usual tactics of avoiding a pitched battle while harassing the rear-guard of the enemy, forced Zaman, already worried by domestic troubles, to evacuate Lahore and return home. Crossing the Jhelum in flood, the Afghan monarch lost 12 of his guns, and not being able to wait for their extrication, he promised Ranjit Singh then master of that part of the Punjab, the grant of the city and district of Lahore, with the title of Raja, if he would send them to him. This Ranjit did, and Zaman Shah kept his promise. Ranjit took possession of Lahore without much opposition and set up his headquarters there.

The acquisition of Lahore in 1799, with the legally acquired title of Raja, made Ranjit Singh a very powerful chief. This filled the Sikh barons with alarm and some of them were anxious to defeat his ambitious schemes. But Ranjit was too clever to fall a victim to their intrigues and he boldly attacked the fort of Amritsar and driving away the Bhangis, entered the city in triumph. He thus became the master of the two Sikh capitals, political and religious, and the dominating chief of the Punjab. It was only a matter of time for the remaining confederacies

to fall before the Maharaja who emerged the undisputed ruler of the Trans-Sutlej Punjab almost unheeded by the British.

Anglo-Sikh Relations

Since, during all these years they had been busy with their own campaigns against the Marathas and with the conquest of Hindustan, the red line on the map which marked the British frontier was ever widening. Banaras, Oudh, Allahabad, Kanpur, had in turn fallen, when in September 1803, General Lake defeating the Maratha army beneath the walls of Delhi, entered the capital of Hindustan as a conqueror. Two months later the Marathas were again defeated at Laswari and the Scindia ceded Sirsa, Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon to the British.

This brought the new power in collision with the Cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs who in the following years gave them trouble in the neighbourhood of the Jamuna and ravaged the country up to the walls of Delhi. The British had thus to conclude a treaty of friendship with Ranjit Singh in 1806 which practically secured him from British interference in his plans of conquest north of the Sutlej, but left undefined the position of the country held by Sikh chiefs south of the river.

In 1806 some of the chiefs quarrelling amongst themselves called in Ranjit Singh who, eager to extend his influence, crossed the river both in that year and in the following one. Some of the Sikh chiefs taking alarm, applied in 1808 to the British in Delhi for protection, and the latter despatched a mission under Metcalfe to persuade Ranjit to confine his kingdom to a line north of the Sutlej and to suggest an offensive and defensive alliance against the French, if they should ever march on India through Persia.

Obviously this mission and the one of Elphinstone to Kabul was due to the fear of a Franco-Russian invasion through the north-western passes of India. Though geographically it may now appear an impossibility yet in those days when ancient kingdoms in Europe were falling like ninepin, no one could set a limit to the power and ambition of Napoleon. The battle of Copenhagen and the assassination of the Tzar gave Napoleon other work to do, and Russia and Britain made a treaty in 1805. But Napoleon entered into an alliance with Persia and agreed to aid Persia against Russia, and Persia undertook to provision and reinforce any French army marching through their country to invade India. Within a year, however, Napoleon had

again other work upon his hands, and the vision of a French empire in the East faded away. When the danger of a French invasion was recognised as over, the British employed pressure tactics on Ranjit Singh and induced him to sign the treaty of Amritsar in April, 1809.

But though he was given a *carte blanche* so far as the region to the west and north of the Sutlej was concerned, the British did not look with equanimity his rapid conquest of vast territories extending up to the Karakoram. Ranjit Singh on his part followed the terms of the treaty scrupulously, but the British who had their eye on the frontier regions of Afghanistan and the Derajat, secretly carried on political intrigue there. They openly took over the Cis-Sutlej states and occupied Ferozepur where they set up a military cantonment in 1835.

But when Maharaja Ranjit Singh wanted to have Shikarpur in Sind, the British did not approve of it. To crown all they entered into negotiations with Shah Shuja which resulted in the Tripartite Treaty of 1838 between the British, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, assuring the latter the throne of Afghanistan with the help of the British and Sikh troops. The Maharaja politically and financially weakened by the numerous frontier wars and physically in the last stages of decay, was an unwilling partner in this business, but knowing well that he could not improve his position by remaining aloof, he signed the Treaty.

Extension of Sikh Kingdom

All these moves by the British were due to the fact that Ranjit Singh came to be considered as their rival in India and consequently an attempt was made to check and curb his power. The Maharaja after the Treaty of Amritsar turned his attention to the conquest of the territories held by Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan. After several attempts at the reduction of the fort, he finally succeeded in capturing it in 1818. In the following year he annexed the province of Kashmir, wresting it out of the hands of the Afghans. This more than doubled the area of his possessions. He had already subjugated Kangra in 1809. All the Muslim chiefs and nobles of the Punjab — Kharrals, Ghakhars, Tiwanas, Chibs, etc — fell one by one, under the supremacy of Maharaja Ranjit Sing and by the year 1820 his power may be said to have been consolidated and absolute throughout the Punjab proper from the Sutlej to the Indus.

His conquest of Peshawar and the hill country of Hazara, however, was a difficult and lengthy operation, costing him much in money, officers, and troops. After several ineffective campaigns, the city and province of Peshawar became tributary to the Maharaja in 1823. But these districts were a constant source of trouble and expense, and in frequent conflicts with the Barakzai chiefs and the ferocious and untamable tribes he lost many of his best officers and troops. This explains his great need of money and the consequent heavy and cruel exactions which he levied on his subjects in general and Kashmiris in particular. His worries grew with every expedition he led to the frontier and severely told on his failing health, and hastened his death which occurred on 27 June 1839.

A great warrior and statesman, Ranjit Singh was one of the great leaders which India produced during the period of transition between the fall of the Mughal and the establishment of the British empires. Like Hyder Ali he was illiterate, but he possessed a sharp memory and a natural genius for command and people obeyed him by instinct. An excellent horseman, he was the *beau ideal* of a soldier; strong, spruce, active, courageous and enduring. At the same time he was selfish and avaricious, grossly superstitious and addicted to drink. But with all his sternness Ranjit Singh was not cruel or bloodthirsty. He treated the vanquished with leniency and kindness. He possessed the faculty of choosing his subordinates well and wisely, and rewarding good service by liberal grants in cash or estates. He was shrewd enough to realise the advantages of having a perfectly trained and disciplined army. He built up a modern army by employing experienced French officers like Court and Avitabile.

But with all his qualities of a born leader, Ranjit Singh was not destined to give peace and tranquility to his subjects. His whole career was employed in conducting military campaigns and this naturally resulted in heavy taxation and requisition of forced labour from the people. His officers and troops, born and bred with a hatred for the Muslims, did not always follow his noble example of religious toleration. This and other pernicious characteristics of his reign had their unfortunate repercussions on Kashmir during the brief period of 27 years that he and his successors ruled over it.

Sikh Rule in Kashmir

The history of the province from the year 1819 when Ranjit Singh

conquered it and until its grant by the English to Raja Gulab Singh in 1846, differs little from that of other Sikh districts except that, being far removed from Lahore, the governors were able to fleece the people with more than the usual impunity. "The Sikhs", observes Younghusband "who succeeded the Afghans were not so barbarically cruel, but they were hard and rough masters."[1] Kashmir was administered by ten governors during their rule. Of these one, Diwan Moti Ram, occupied the gubernatorial chair twice.

On its occupation by the Sikh army, Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed the commander of the forces, Misr Diwan Chand, as the first governor of Kashmir. Belonging to the Hindu trading class, Misr Diwan Chand was the conqueror of Multan in 1818, and the leader of the successful expedition to Kashmir in 1819. Excepting for his mopping up operations in the hilly tracts of the Valley, there is nothing worthy of note in Misr Diwan Chand's brief governorship.

More important, however, is the rule of the second governor, Diwan Moti Ram, son of Diwan Mokham Chand, the able general of the Maharaja. Moti Ram though indolent and not troubling himself much about administration, was yet a kind-hearted man and liked by the people. During his short tenure of 14 months he was assisted by Pandit Birbal Dhar, the collector of revenues.

Harsh Treatment of Muslims

In their first flush of victory, the Sikh officials both civil and military, overlooked the fact that though the majority of Kashmiris professed the Muslim faith, they were as much an oppressed people under the Afghans as the Hindus and needed an enlightened ruler. Accustomed to facing bitter opposition from Muslims in the Punjab and Frontier District, they looked at the Kashmiris in the same light and promulgated orders with a view to checking the emergence of a Muslim opposition in the Valley. Consequently one of the first acts of Diwan Moti Ram was to close the Jama Masjid at Srinagar to public prayers in order to prevent, as he thought, the meeting together of Muslim leaders and their followers who, he imagined, might plot against the Sikhs. The Muslims were forbidden to say *azan* or the call to prayer. In fact, one overzealous commander, Phula Singh, trained his guns on the Shah Hamadan mosque from the opposite bank of the river to blow it up on the plea that it had been built over a Hindu

1. *Kashmir*, p. 142.

shrine. But on the intervention of Birbal Dhar, the influential noble of the time, the order was not executed. "It is to the lasting credit of Birbal Dhar that when a deputation of Muslims headed by Sayyid Hassan Shah Qadiri Khanyari approached him to dissuade the Sikhs from the destruction of the *Khanaqah* he moved in the matter, used his influence and saved this historic structure from vandalism."[2] The Sikh commander, however, declared several other mosques, like Pathar Masjid, as the property of the State. Cow slaughter was declared a crime punishable by death and many people accused of killing cows were publicly hanged.

Heavy Taxation

But Moti Ram was personally a kind-hearted man and "by his just and human conduct restored confidence in the Valley".[3] He, however, remained in office for only 14 months and wishing to retire to Banaras, resigned the appointment on the death of his eldest son, Ram Dayal, who was killed in Hazara in 1820. The Maharaja sent as his successor the fighting general, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. But his ideas of government were so primitive that there was widespread distress in the land. He resumed the Jagirs and hereditary allowances held by a number of families and persons from the time of the Mughal emperors and devoted his attention to the collection of the last farthing that could be extracted from the poor Kashmiri taxpayer. Pandit Birbal Dhar who had induced Ranjit Singh to invade and annex Kashmir, was in charge of collection of revenues and when in 1821 Maharaja Ranjit Singh called him and his colleagues to Lahore for inspection of accounts, he so impressed the Maharaja with his zealous performance of duty which resulted in the remittance to the Lahore Treasury of over 40 lakhs of rupees, that he bestowed honours on the Pandit and sent him back in state to Srinagar. This signal honour to Birbal evoked jealousy in his cousin, Ganesh Dhar, who sowed seeds of discord between Hari Singh Nalwa, the governor, and Birbal Dhar, the revenue farmer, and soon on the reports of the former that Birbal was hatching an intrigue with the chiefs of the hill districts, Ranjit Singh summoned him to Lahore, where he was dismissed from service and all his property confiscated.

Hari Singh Nalwa led a small expedition to the Jhelum valley, the

2. Sufi, *Kashir,* Vol. II p. 726.
3. Lawrence, *Valley,* p. 199.

Khakha leader of Uri having defaulted in the payment of his annual tribute. He built a fort at Uri and confiscating the property of the Khakha chief, posted a Sikh garrison therein.

Hari Singh Nalwa introduced a new rupee of base coinage in Kashmir, known as Hari Singh rupee which continued to be in circulation till late into the 19th century. Worth about 12 annas, the coin carried on the obverse the legend *Sri Akal Jiu* and on the revere *Hari Singh.* Rents, taxes and custom duties were generally paid in this coin.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, could not, due to his misgovernment of the province, remain in charge of the administration for long. Maharaja Ranjit Singh recalled him and sent back Diwan Moti Ram again. He remained in charge till 1825 and during this second tenure tried to ameliorate the miserable condition of the people. He re-appointed Birbal Dhar to the office of revenue collector, but the two could not pull on well together and on the charge of his revenue having fallen in arrears not only confiscated his property but put him behind the bars where ultimately he died. It is "a strange irony of fate that he who had made it possible for the Sikh ruler to occupy the country and who greatly contributed to the strengthening of the administration should have died as prisoner."[4]

Moorcraft's Activities in Ladakh

It was during Moti Ram's governorship in 1822 that Moorcraft arrived in Kashmir from Ladakh where he had gone by the Kulu route two years earlier, ostensibly to find out ways and means for extending British commerce in Central Asia, but really to collect information, geographic, political and military, for the British government in India. He was accompanied in these journeys by George Trebeck. Moorcraft was the superintendent of the military stud of the East India Company, but his adventurous spirit took him to the remotest corners of northern India till then unknown to the European travellers.

Proceeding to Lahore from Ludhiana, he obtained Ranjit Singh's permission to travel in Ladakh and entering it by the Baralacha pass he and his companion soon reached Leh. From there they toured the Nubra valley and a longer expedition took them to the eastern boundary of Ladakh beyond the Pangong Lake. He was, however,

4. Kilam, *History of Kashmiri Pandits,* p. 256.

recalled to Leh when he was near Chushul, but the journey was continued by Trebeck. He wanted to go to Yarkand and while waiting for the permission of the Chinese authorities, he travelled to Dras and Trebeck went to Spiti. The Chinese authorities, however, refused him permission to go to Yarkand and he decided to set out for Bokhara by way of Kashmir and Kabul. He spent six months in Srinagar till May, 1823, in "collecting information and occasional excursions". Having obtained passports for their onward journey after some delay, Moorcraft and Trebeck proceeded to Peshawar and on to Kabul and Bokhara. At Andkho, however, Moorcraft fell ill and died and his property was looted. Trebeck having gone on to Mazar, also succumbed to fever and died there.

Moorcraft's journeys in Ladakh and Kashmir were motivated by the dread that the British were developing because of the Russian advance towards Afghanistan and Central Asia. A former king of Afghanistan, Shah Shuja, was passing his days in Ludhiana as a stipendary of the British. In short, the stage was being set for a vigorous forward policy in the north. Moorcraft, when in Ladakh in 1821, "became possessed of a letter from the Russian Minister, Prince Nesselrode, recommending a merchant to the good offices of Ranjit Singh and assuring him that the traders of the Punjab would be well received in the Russian dominions, for the emperor was himself a benign ruler, he earnestly desired the prosperity of other countries, and he was especially the well-wisher of that reigned over by the King of Sikhs. The person recommended had died on his way southward from Russia; and it appeared that, six years previously, he had been the bearer of similar communications for the Maharaja of Lahore and the Raja of Ladakh."[5]

No wonder Moorcraft engaged himself in political intrigue in Ladakh to the annoyance of Ranjit Singh and the embarassment of the British Indian Government. He actively encouraged the Raja of Ladakh to refuse payment of tribute to the Sikh governor of Kashmir, and got an application of the Raja forwarded to the British government seeking the protection of the British. In these parts Moorcraft "gave himself out, under the rose, as the forerunner of an English conquest".[6] When Ranjit Singh reported this to Metcalfe, the British Resident at Delhi, Moorcraft was censured by the Bengal Govern-

5. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 150.
6. Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, p. 247.

ment and Ranjit was informed that he had acted without any authority from the East India Company. Moorcraft also made direct overtures to Ahmad Shah, the chief of Baltistan, and promised him British support in the event of a Sikh invasion of his territory. All this shows the active interest that the British were taking in Kashmir and its frontier regions as early as the first quarter of the 19th century.

Diwan Moti Ram's second tenure of office as governor of Kashmir ended with his recall in 1825 "when the family fell into disgrace owing to the sinister influence of Raja Dhyan Singh, and Diwan Chuni Lal, a man of no account, took his place for a year and a half".[7] He and the revenue farmer Gurmukh Singh did not pull on well together and with the deteriorating economic condition of the people, it resulted in a serious drop in revenue. Chuni Lal was recalled by the Maharaja, but fearing a harsh treatment at the latter's hands, he committed suicide by poison while on his way to Lahore.

Diwan Kripa Ram

He was succeeded by Diwan Kripa Ram, the son of Diwan Moti Ram and the grandson of Diwan Mokham Chand. Intelligent and having uncommon ideas of magnificence, he beautified Srinagar with many fine buildings and pleasure grounds. The Rambagh garden where stands Maharaja Gulab Singh's monument, was laid out by him.

He was a mild, self-indulgent man, fond of boating and nick-named 'Kripa Shroin' after the sound of the boat-paddle. Wherever he went, he was followed by dancing girls and even the rowers of his state barge were women.

There occurred a severe earthquake in 1827, followed a few months later by an epidemic of cholera. The earthquake resulted in a fearful loss of life and property. The tremors, some of them severe, continued to take place intermittently for three months. In the mean-time cholera was taking a heavy toll of life. The number of dead was so great that there was not enough cloth to shroud the dead bodies in.

Diwan Kripa Ram had to lead a punitive expedition to Muzaffara-bad where the Raja, Zabardast Khan, had raised his banner of revolt. In the initial stages the rebel forces, hiding in mountain fastnesses, inflicted severe losses on the Sikh army, but the commander, Ganesh Pandit Dhar, created dissensions among the several minor hill chiefs

7. Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 196.

and defeated them one by one. Zabardast Khan ultimately surrendered and was pardoned on his undertaking to pay annual tribute regularly to the Maharaja.

Notwithstanding the visitations of natural calamities, the people of Kashmir seem to have recouped their economic well-being under Kripa Ram's mild rule. According to Baron Schonberg, a European traveller who visited Kashmir a few years later (1845), Kripa Ram annually remitted to Ranjit Singh's treasury at Lahore, a sum of 42 lakhs of rupees "and the country was at that time happy in comparison to what it is now." His chief adviser, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din, made a rough settlement of land, and introduced the system of farming out to the highest bidder the revenues of various Parganas or districts.

In 1831, Kripa Ram again incurred the enmity of Raja Dhyan Singh. "He had given protection to Raja Faiz Talab Khan of Bhimbar, whom both the Dogra Rajas hated and wished to capture; while Kripa Ram resolutely refused to give him up." In the midst of a pleasure party on the Dal lake, he was recalled to Lahore, and there being disgraced, retired to Banaras, where along with his father he led an ascetic life.

> His family for three generations had done good and brilliant service for the Maharaja, but this did not save them from the ingratitude of their master, who cared nothing for men whose work was done, or who had become obnoxious to a new favourite. This absolute selfishness of Ranjit Singh, and the shameful manner in which he ignored faithful service were the most unpleasing features in his character. Diwan Mokham Chand, the founder of the Diwan family was his best and most successful general, and it was in great measure owing to his military ability that the Maharaja established himself as sole ruler of the Punjab. But this did not save his son, Moti Ram, or his grandson, Kripa Ram, from constant slights, fines, confiscation and eventual ruin.[8]

On Diwan Kripa Ram's recall to Lahore, the Maharaja appointed Bhima Singh Ardali as acting governor of Kashmir. Not much is known of his antecedents. He was at the head of the administration for a year (1831) and the only event of note was a serious outbreak of sectarian riot among the Shias and the Sunnis in which the whole locality of Zadibal, a suburb of Srinagar inhabited mostly by Shias, was burnt. The following winter was unusually cold and the

8. Lepel Griffin, Ibid, pp. 196-197.

people suffered a great deal.

It was in the same year that Victor Jacquemont, a French Naturalist, visited Kashmir. Born in 1801, Jacquemont had visited America and West Indies when he was appointed by the Jardin des Plantes in Paris to carry out a botanical survey in India. Very soon the Himalayas attracted him and after taking Ranjit Singh's permission to visit Kashmir, he travelled via the Poonch route. After encountering some opposition from a minor hill chief, he succeeded in reaching the Valley where he spent five months, studying the people and the political situation. He has recorded his experiences in the Valley and the life of its people in a book. In one of his visits to the Burzil pass — the route leading to Gilgit — he received an envoy of the local chief, Ahmad Shah, who having been assured of British help and subsidy by Moorcraft, wanted further assurances from Jacquemont whom he took as an agent of the British Government. Jacquemont left Kashmir in 1831 via the Pir Panjal pass.

By 1830 Ranjit Singh had brought Peshawar and the adjoining territories under his sway. Hazara was subjugated too. The rapid defeat of several Muslim chieftains and the rise of a strong non-Muslim State, produced a wave of reaction against the Sikhs. This resentment among the Muslims produced a political-cum-religious leader in the person of Sayyid Ahmed Shah, who collected round him a number of devoted followers. He preached religious and social reform among the Muslims and made an attempt at the political rehabilitation of the Indian Muslims. With his band of followers he travelled from Hindustan to the frontier regions of Ranjit Singh's dominions — Peshawar and Hazara. The turbulent Afghans and tribesmen joined him in large numbers and soon Sayyid Ahmed was successful in driving out the Sikh garrison from Peshawar. His puritanic doctrines and the presence of his Indian followers, did not find favour with some of the chiefs of the tribal area and he had to relinquish Peshawar where Ranjit re-established his authority. In 1831, Sayyid Ahmed proceeded to the left bank of the Indus to give battle to the Sikhs.

The Sayyid depended chiefly on the few 'Ghazis' who had followed his fortunes throughout, and on the insurrectionary spirit of the Muzaffarabad and other chiefs. The hill 'Khans' were soon brought under subjection by the efforts of Sher Singh and the Governor of Kashmir; yet Ahmed continued an active, and, a desultory war amid rugged mountains. Success for a time attended him; but during a cessation of frequent conflicts, he was surprised early in May, 1831, at a place called Balakot and fallen upon and slain.[9]

All this shows the disturbed political conditions round about Kashmir during the thirties of the 19th century, and the consequent need by the Sikhs of a large number of forces and huge sums of money to hold these hilly tracts. It is not, therefore, difficult to account for the cruel exactions levied upon the poor Kashmiris by the Sikh governors and their subordinates, and the constant harassment to them through the demand of forced labour *(begar)* for carrying supplies to the soldiers in the field.

This helpless and pitiable condition of the people was further aggravated during the following three years, when Kashmir fell into the grip of one of the most severe famines in its long history. Man and Nature combined in bringing it about.

Famine

In 1832 when Prince Sher Singh, the reputed son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, took over from Bhima Singh Ardali the governorship of Kashmir, the Maharaja started from Lahore on a visit to the Valley. He deputed Jamadar Khushal Singh and Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din to collect supplies for his camp. They executed the orders with such rigour that there resulted a scarcity all over the province. Ranjit Singh, however, came to know of it and went back to Lahore from Poonch. Then in the month of October when rice had not yet been harvested there was a heavy snowfall which destroyed the entire crop of this staple food of the Kashmiris. The result was a severe famine. Thousands of people died from starvation and thousands emigrated to the Punjab. The population of the Valley was reduced from eight to two lakhs.

The governor, Prince Sher Singh, did not make any effort to either import foodgrains for the starving people, or to persuade

9. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 172.

hoarders to bring out the grains and sell them at reasonable rates. Instead, he passed his days in drinking and left the affairs of the government in the hands of a worthless official, Baisakha Singh. On the complaints lodged by the people with Ranjit Singh, the Prince was recalled to Lahore and Colonel Mian Singh was appointed in his place.

Mian Singh

Known in Kashmir as 'Colonel', Mian Singh was the best of the Sikh governors. He was a veteran soldier and was proud of as many as 27 scars of wounds received in several battles fought under the leadership of the Maharaja. On his arrival in Srinagar he witnessed from the balcony of the palace the signs of distress in the land. Not a single lamp was lit in the city and no cock was crowing, all fowl having been eaten by the famine-stricken people. By importing grain and eggs from the Punjab he restored some measure of prosperity among the villagers, and "with a view to stimulating population, remitted the tax upon marriages, and set to work to bring some order in the administration. Revenue divisions were made, and the villages were either farmed out to contractors or leased on the principle that the state took half of the produce in kind. Agricultural advances were made free of interest, proper weights were introduced, and the fraudulent middle men were punished. Colonel Mian Singh decided cases justly and quickly, and won a great reputation in Kashmir."[10]

Trouble on the Frontier

It was during his regime that several European travellers came to Kashmir, ostensibly on evangelical or scientific mission, but in reality to collect information on the condition of the province and its people and the possibility of an English penetration into the frontier territories.

All over the tribal territory and Afghanistan trouble was brewing for the Sikhs. Amir Dost Muhammad who ruled over a part of Afghanistan launched an attack on the Sikhs in the hope of recovering Peshawar and adjacent areas. Though gaining a few initial successes on the northern borders of Ranjit's dominions, he was repulsed with great loss in May 1835, when the Sikhs were "commonly said to have 80,000 men in the Peshawar Valley". Intermittent Skirmishes

10. Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 200.

continued for over two years, and in April 1837, the combined Afghan forces invested the Maharaja's fort at Jamrud which was under the command of the brave general, Hari Singh Nalwa. The latter was killed in action there but though the Afghans plundered the adjoining valley, the Sikh garrison held out till the arrival of a massive force from Lahore which dispersed the Afghans and completely occupied the Peshawar valley.

But the British were now openly active there. Ranjit Singh had scarcely vindicated his supremacy on the frontier, when they interfered to embitter the short remainder of his life, and to set bounds to his ambition on the west, as they had already done on the east and south. "At the end of a generation the repose of the English masters of India was again disturbed by the rumoured march of European armies."[11] Plans were being prepared for an invasion of Afghanistan in one garb or another, and it was in furtherence of that objective that the Alexander Burnes Mission was sent to Afghanistan which later led to the First Afghan War.

Mian Singh's Assassination

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's troubles on the frontier and his gradual decline in health, put a great strain on his financial resources, and the pay of the army ran into arrears. The Sikh soldiers stationed in Kashmir, accustomed to levying exactions on the already famished people, were, however, kept under check by Colonel Mian Singh. This made him unpopular with them and when there was chaos and instability at Lahore following the death of the Maharaja in 1839, they mutinied, and a few of them entering his bedchamber on the night of 17 April 1841, murdered him in cold blood. His death threw the Valley into gloom and for long the people mourned the loss of this benevolent and just ruler.

To restore authority and punish the mutinous soldiers, Maharaja Sher Singh, then the ruler of the Punjab, despatched Raja Gulab Singh with a strong force. The mutiny was quelled and in 1842 the Maharaja appointed Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din as governor of Kashmir.

Zorawar Singh's Expedition to Ladakh

While the Lahore Government was in convulsions, its spirit of

11. Cunningham, Ibid, p. 192.

progress and annexation was active on the frontiers, which were not hemmed in by British armies. Raja Gulab Singh who had been formally invested as the ruler of Jammu by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1820, was taking full advantage of the chaotic conditions in Lahore following the death of Ranjit Singh. Till then the governors of Kashmir had always been jealous of his inroads into Ladakh and Baltistan, but Mian Singh, the governor of the Valley during the commotions at Lahore, was alarmed into concessions by the powerful and ambitious Raja of Jammu, and he left Skardu, and the whole valley of the Upper Indus, a free field for the conquests of the Raja's lieutenant, Wazir Zorawar Singh. The latter took Ladakh and Garo and reduced the chief of Skardu, Ahmad Shah, to vassalage. In his desire of acquiring territory he was encouraged by his chief and he became so bold as to attack the Lhasa forces with a view to conquering the whole of Tibet. But the long and tedious march over cold and barren uplands and a premature snowfall so weakened the Dogra forces that they were completely annihilated and Zorawar Singh lost his life. But before his tragic end, he had secured the secession by treaty, ratified by the Chinese and Tibetan governments, of the whole of Ladakh to Jammu.

With the installation of Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din as governor at Srinagar, Raja Gulab Singh acquired an enormous influence in the Valley. From then onwards he was biding his time to formally annex it to his growing kingdom of Jammu.

In 1843 the Jhelum valley was thrown into confusion by the restless Bombas. Their leader, Zabardast Khan, had been entrapped by the authorities and imprisoned in Srinagar. To avenge this, Sher Ahmad, the most daring of the Bombas, destroyed 7,000 men of the Sikh army at Kahori, and after raiding the countryside, marched with 8,000 matchlocks against Kashmir. The governor's son, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, gave him battle with a force of 12,000 men at Shilal, in the north-west of Kashmir, but was severely defeated. Due to snowfall the Sikh leaders were forced to retreat and Zabardast Khan had to be given back to his friends.

To win the goodwill of the Kashmiris, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din opened the Jama Masjid at Srinagar, the gates of which had been closed to the faithful in 1819. Simultaneously he repaired the temple on the Sankaracarya hill in Srinagar and installed a new *lingam* therein. He restored the *Jagirs* and cash grants to scholars, poets, mendicants and religious leaders. He ordered the sale of government

grain at reduced prices, thus bringing down the price of grain offered for sale by private traders.

Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din was called upon by Raja Gulab Singh to render aid in transport and supplies for his army sent to quell the risings of Ladakhis following Zorawar Singh's defeat and death in Tibet. The Dogra army, 6,000 strong, marched through Kashmir during the winter of 1842, and the governor procured for them 15 days' rations and 10,000 villagers for carriage of their baggage to the inhospitable regions of Ladakh. This naturally resulted in widespread distress in the Valley. In the following spring Gulab Singh set up his camp at Nasim Bagh to personally supervise the despatch of arms, ammunition and supplies to his forces, and sent 4,000 troops more to reinforce his army. His commander, Hari Chand, won a decisive victory, reoccupied Leh, and sent the Raja of Ladakh as prisoner to Jammu.

In 1842 a call for help reached Mohi-ud-din from one of the scions of the ruling dynasty of Gilgit and the Sikhs seizing upon this opportunity, sent a force under Mathra Dass to Gilgit who installed a chief of their choice on the throne and made him a vassal of the Lahore Government.

Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din was an able and enlightened governor and the people of the Valley would have maintained the progress achieved under Mian Singh, had not the instability at the Lahore Court and the turbulence of the Sikh soldiery, together with the increasing British interference and intrigue in the frontier regions, prevented him from running a good administration. The rising power of Gulab Singh in Jammu, however, dominated his actions till his death in 1845.

End of Sikh Rule

Sheikh Imam-ud-din, son of Sheikh Gulam Mohi-ud-din was appointed to succeed him to the gubernatorial chair. The best mannered and best dressed man in the Punjab, Sheikh Imam-ud-din with his intelligence and good education, would have been a successful governor. But the fluid state of conditions in Lahore and the kaleidoscopic changes in the administration there, did not permit him to exercise effective control over Kashmir, particularly with the growing turbulence of the Sikh soldiery.

For, with the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, there was

wild anarchy all over the Punjab,. After the obsequies were over Prince Kharak Singh, his son, born of Rani Raj Kaur, ascended the throne with the help of Raja Dhyan Singh, who became his prime minister. But soon prince Nau Nihal Singh, the real offspring of Kharak Singh, hastened from Peshawar to take upon himself the duties of ruler. He succeeded without any great effort to remove his father's adviser, Chet Singh, by murder, and then pushing aside his father from the administration he became the de facto ruler of the kingdom. A few months later Kharak Singh died prematurely, careworn, at the age of 38; and Nau Nihal Singh became king in name as well as in power. But the same day, after performing the last rites at the funeral pyre of his father he met with death by a stone falling on his head from a door pillar.

The good-natured voluptuary, Sher Singh, was proclaimed as sovereign, but Chand Kaur, the widow of Kharak Singh, would not give up power. A little later a compromise was effected by which Chand Kaur remained the sovereign and Sher Singh the vice-regent. Chand Kaur, however, met a sudden death at the hands of her maidservants who "crushed the head of their mistress with a brick while she was enjoying her siesta".

But Sher Singh addicted to immoderate drinking did not enjoy the throne for long. While reviewing troops, he was shot dead by a scion of the family of Sindhanwalias related to Rani Chand Kaur. Raja Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh were also killed and so was the boy-prince, Partap Singh, the son of Maharaja Sher Singh.

Prince Dhuleep Singh, a child of nine years, and a reputed son of Ranjit Singh born of the Rani Jindan, was now placed on the throne. The child king was only the titular Maharaja, whereas Rani Jindan wielded real powers. The Sikh soldiers had, during the anarchical days, become turbulent and it was a problem to keep them under control. What with the political murders and rapid change of rulers, the widespread discontent among the soldiers whose salaries ran into arrears, and the nefarious activities of British agents in the Punjab and frontier territories, the administration collapsed entirely. And then came the provocation from the British army massed on the Sutlej ready for war. The Rani ordered a march against them and the First Sikh War of 1846 was the result.

After bitter battles and the defeat of the Sikhs, the Treaty of Lahore was concluded between the British and the Lahore Govern-

ment. It contained a clause by which the British agreed to transfer out of the territory ceded to them by the Sikhs, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and his male heirs, all the hilly and mountainous country, with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravi.

Economic Conditions During Sikh Rule

The Sikh regime is a landmark in the history of Kashmir. After five long centuries of Muslim rule, the Kingdom passed into the hands of the Hindus when Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered it in 1819. The Sikhs were by no means enlightened masters, yet both Hindus and Muslims considered their rule far better and far more humane than that of the Afghans. Sir Walter Lawrence writes:

> It must have been, an intense relief to all classes in Kashmir to see the downfall of the evil rule of the Pathans, and to none was the relief greater than to the peasants, who had been cruelly fleeced by the rapacious *sirdars* of Kabul. I do not mean to suggest that the Sikh rule was benign or good, but it was at any rate better than that of the Pathans.[12] There is no doubt about the low standard of life among all the classes of Kashmir during the Sikh rule, but it was to a great extent the legacy of the Afghans and of the numerous atrocities committed by them in the name of religion. The Sikhs ruled for only 27 years and during that period they were preoccupied with military expeditions and could, therefore, devote very little time and thought to ameliorating the sad condition of the people. They, however, freed the Valley of constant incursions of Bombas and Khakhas who used to loot the people of all their property. Baron von Hugel, who visited Kashmir in 1836, writes: "The dreadful cruelties perpetrated by their earlier rulers who, for the smallest offence, punished them with the loss of their noses and ears, make the poor Kashmiris well satisfied with their present comparatively mild government."

Political Geography

The extent of the area of Kashmir that was under the Sikhs was limited to the Valley proper, viz, from Verinag in the south to Baramula in the north and from the mountain chain in the east to Pir Panjal in the west.

12. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 198.

Politically the geography of Kashmir during the Sikh rule was very different from what it is today. Across the Sindh valley in the east was the territory nominally under the joint control of the Sikhs and the tribes residing there, but actually the latter had the sole control. And beyond the border territory were many petty principalities engaged in perpetual warfare among themselves. Consequently, the Sikhs were left in peace on that side of the Valley. But to the north-west the case was different. The bold and warlike tribes of Bombas and Khakhas who now and then carried out looting incursions into the Valley, were a constant source of anxiety and danger to the Sikhs. In fact many times during their rule Bombas and Khakhas looted the Valley as far up as Pattan and were with very great difficulty driven back by the Sikhs. Consequently, the trade route through the Jhelum valley was closed for all commerce. In fact, Moorcraft who visited Kashmir in 1822 had to return from Uri as the Khakha chief would not allow him to pass. Towards the south and south-west was the Sikh territory and, therefore, the major part of the trade of Kashmir passed through the Pir Panjal and Banihal passes.

Large tracts of land towards the Lolab and the Sindh valleys were under forests. Much of the cultivable land was nothing but swamp and the now productive *Karewas* (hillocks) were barren. There were only footpaths throughout, and the flood-protection dams and embankments were, of course, totally absent.

The location of the majority of villages and towns was the same as it is at the present time. But Moorcraft's and Hugel's descriptions of Srinagar or of Anantnag in the Sikh period no longer hold true. The city of Srinagar was situated more towards the Nala Mar, where the best houses in the city were to be found. Sheikh Mohalla was the centre of trade and in it were the houses of big merchants and bankers. There were several canals flowing through the city. These canals were lined with stone "derived frequently from the ruins of Hindu temples, the sculpture on which was turned inwards". They were crossed at various places by stone and wooden bridges. But their general condition during the Sikh rule was that of decay and they

were choked with clay and mud. Moorcraft writes:

> The general condition of the city of Srinagar, is that of confused mass of ill favoured buildings, forming a complicated labyrinth of narrow and dirty lanes, scarcely broad enough for a single cart to pass, badly paved, and having a small gutter in the centre full of filth, banked up on each side by a border of mire. The houses are in general two or three storeys high: they are built of unburnt bricks and timber, the former serving for little else than to fill up the interstices of the latter; they are not plastered, are badly constructed and are mostly in a neglected and ruinous condition, with broken doors, or no doors at all, with shattered lattices, windows stopped up with boards, paper or rags, walls out of the perpendicular and pitched roofs threatening to fall..... The houses of the better class are commonly detached, and surrounded by a wall and gardens, the latter of which often communicate with a canal; the condition of the gardens is no better than that of the buildings and the whole presents a striking picture of wretchedness and decay.[13]

Anantnag was the chief town in the Valley. There were 300 shops of shawl weavers and *gubba* manufacturers. But the town was as filthy as Srinagar. Baramula, Sopore, Shahabad and Bijbihara were also the towns of importance.

The Number of People

There is no record of any census having been taken during the Sikh rule. Travellers like Moorcraft and Hugel give varying figures based entirely on rough estimate. Moorcraft writes that the population of the city of Srinagar, although much diminished was very numerous. "One hundred and twenty thousand persons," he writes, "are said to be employed in the shawl manufacture alone; and although this is the chief employment of the population, yet other trades and occupations essential to the support of a large city must at least double the amount. The population of the country is estimated at 800,000." But Baron Hugel who visited Kashmir 14 years later, writes that the population had declined to one-fourth in the country, namely, to 200,000.

The causes of the huge difference between the population of the city and the country, are quite obvious. What with the political disturbances and the numerous tyrannies suffered by the peasants,

13. Moorcraft, *Travels in Kashmir, Punjab, etc.*, p. 120.

the latter found it very hard to live in Kashmir and a large number of people migrated to the Punjab and other parts of India. When Moorcraft left the Valley in 1823, about 500 emigrants accompanied him across the Pir Panjal pass. Moreover, the severe famine of 1832 caused the death of thousands of people, so much so that Colonel Mian Singh, when he came as the Sikh Governor in 1833, witnessed from the balcony of the Shergarhi Palace that there was not a single lamp lit in the city and heard no cock crowing in the morning, all the fowls having been eaten by the famine stricken.[14] Thus emigration, coupled with death by famine had reduced the population to one-fourth by 1836. The huge population of the city of Srinagar can also be accounted for very easily. Shawl industry which was in a flourishing condition so far as production goes could give employment to some of the impoverished peasants even though the emoluments were barely sufficient to enable a labourer to keep his body and soul together. Moreover, there was in the city greater security from the tyranny of the Sikh soldiery, and peasants fleeing from the country could live on the charity of the government and the big capitalists.

The Classes of Population

During five centuries of Muslim rule which ended in 1819 when the Sikhs conquered the province nine-tenths of the population had accepted Islam, while a large number of the remaining Hindus migrated to the Punjab and other parts of India. But still the proportion of the Muslims and Hindus was different from what it is at the present time inasmuch as while the Hindus were not much affected by the famine of 1832, the loss of life was much greater among the Muslims; and the latter alone left the country in large numbers during the Sikh rule.

During the Sikh period there appear to have existed three classes of population — the upper, the middle and the lower. The upper class irrespective of religion, was composed of the Sikh *Sirdars,* the wealthy *Karkhandars* or capitalists, and some families of the Kashmiri Pandits. Kashmiri Pandits in general formed the middle class, while the lower class was formed of the peasantry, the skilled and unskilled labourers.

The economic classes of the country were the government officials, the capitalists and the labourers both skilled and unskilled.

14. Pandit Anand Koul, *Jammu and Kashmir State,* p. 107.

Government played a prominent part in the marketing and sale of the manufactured shawls, whereas the capitalist was the man who supplied the material and instruments to the labourer, keeping the latter in perpetual debt and consequently in bondage. The economic classes in the Shawl industry — which formed the main industry of Kashmir, employing thousands of men and women — were the same as in the present-day industrial world with the difference that the condition of the worker was worse and much of the burden of taxation of the shawl trade fell on him.

Administrations

The country was ruled by a governor, who also represented the Maharaja at all ceremonial occasions. Since Kashmir was conquered with very great difficulty and since the Sikh State was militaristic, most of the governors were military men. It was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy to tamper as little as possible with the existing laws and usages of his territories. But for a greater period Kashmir under the Sikhs was 'occupied' rather than governed. Consequently there was no code of law, but justice depended upon the sweet will of the Qazi — who was the head of the judiciary — or the governor. All the cases were summarily tried. The form of punishment was imprisonment; mutilation, so frequently practised by the Afghans, being rarely resorted to. Hugel writes:

> On the branches of it (a chenar tree), criminals are hanged, a punishment of constant occurrence under the Pathan way, when the smallest offence was visited by death, but now inflicted only in cases of murder. Men are too valuable to the present Ruler to be lightly spared; penalties and stripes are, therefore, the usual punishments. The people seem contented with the justice dealt out to them, and admitted to me that not more than one guilty person in every twenty is ever visited with the reward due to his crimes.[15] Colonel Mian Singh during whose governorship Baron Hugel visited the Valley, was noted for his justice. He was popularly called 'Colonel Nausherwan' and there are many interesting anecdotes of his method of dispensing justice.[16] When he was assassinated by his mutinous troops in 1842, all the people mourned his death and even up to this day old grannies recite the ballad describing Mian Singh's assassination which has the burden of *kato gau Colonel Nausherwan* (Oh ! Why or how has *Colonel Nausherwan* been done away with).

15. Hugel, op. cit., p. 156.
16. *Sikka Shahi* was the name given to this method of summary trials as opposed to costly and protracted trials which are so common nowadays.

Crime in any form was altogether absent among the Kashmiris themselves. But the Sikh soldiers committed untold persecutions on the poor natives of Kashmir. "The murder of a native by a Sikh," writes Moorcraft, "is punished by a fine to the government from sixteen to twenty rupees of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased of a Hindu and two rupees if a Muhammadan."

The ancient practice of *begar* (forced labour) was continued by the Sikhs with greater rigour. A large number of labourers was employed in the transport of military supplies, luggage of high officials, etc, from one part of the country to another. Even an ordinary Sikh soldier could command a native to do any work for him. Moorcraft and Hugel give striking illustrations of natives being forced to work as unpaid labourers for their Sikh masters.

The province was divided into 36 Parganas, each under a revenue farmer, who may well be compared to a Taluqdar of Oudh before the humane Tenancy Act of 1859. He had to pay a fixed amount to the government and was free to collect from the peasants as much as he could. Nine-tenths of the produce was not considered too much for the share of a revenue farmer. Another important official in a Pargana was a Sikh *kotwal* who was in charge of a body of troopers and had to perform the varied duties of a police officer, public-works officer, sanitary inspector, etc. But more often he perpetrated deeds of violence and oppression on the people than looked after their comfort. And many a *kotwal* levied unauthorised tolls and taxes on the people, the proceeds of which he pocketed himself.

Taxes

Besides the land revenue, the Sikhs levied a number of taxes and duties. Toll at the rate of one *tanqa* was taken from every traveller who passed the Pir Panjal or the Banihal passes. Imports from India were heavily taxed and so was the shawl-wool coming from Tibet. At Baramula, the entrance to the Valley via Pir Panjal, duty on salt was realised at the rate of a rupee for a man's load, the annual produce of this duty being said to have amounted to 2,000 rupees.

Every trade and occupation was taxed. The tax on the shawl manufacture alone amounted for sometime to as much as 12 lakhs of rupees per annum. Moorcraft writes that butchers, bakers, boatmen, vendors of fuel, public notaries, scavengers, prostitutes, all paid a sort

of corporation tax. He continues:

> A portion of the *Singhara* (water-nut) crop, to the extent annually of a lakh of rupees, it is said, is claimed by the government. The revenue is farmed, and the farmer is independent of the military governor. At the time of our visit the sum paid by the farmer was thirty-eight lakhs of Punjab rupees, equal to twenty-nine lakhs of Sicca rupees, or about two hundred and ninety thousand pounds; but a much larger sum was extorted from the people, although it was only to be realized by the greatest rigour and oppression.

The effect of this oppressive taxation was the impoverishment of the people and consequently large numbers of them fled the State. The trade of Kashmir was ruined. The heavy taxation of the shawl trade had very undesirable effect on the treatment of labourers by the capitalists, and in a large measure was responsible for the decay of this important industry.

Currency and Weights

A Sikh rupee was the standard coin, the exchange value of which was about ls. 8d. in the then currency of England. The price of a *Kharwar* (184 lbs.) of rice (the staple crop of Kashmir) was from Rs $2\frac{1}{2}$ to Rs $3\frac{1}{2}$ or from 4 to 5 shillings.[17] A *tanqa* or anna (1/16th of a rupee) was the chief circulating coin, and all small transactions were carried on with it. *Cowries* at the rate of 20 to a *tanqa* also circulated as money.

The *Kharwar* and its subdivisions like *trak* and *ser* continued to be the standards of weight. Shawl-wool, rice and other crops, salt and sugar, etc, were bought and sold by the *Kharwar* and its subdivisions.

Land Tenures

The immemorial tradition in Kashmir considers the whole of the land as the property of the ruler. Of some portion of the *Khalsah*[18] land the sovereigns divested themselves by grants in *jagirs* for various periods, but when the country came into the hands of the Sikhs, Ranjit Singh made a general resumption and ousted the possessors of *jagirs* of every class. Moorcraft gives a clear description of the prevailing methods of land tenures during the Sikh period:

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17. Moorcraft,op. cit., p. 194.
18. The Land of which the revenue was the property of the government.

The *Khalsah* lands are now, as heretofore, let out for cultivation. Those near the city are termed *sar-kishti,* those more remote *pai-kishti;* or head and foot, upper and lower cultivation. When the grain has been trodden out, a division takes place between the farmer and the government. This was formerly an equal division, but the government has advanced in its demands until it has appropriated about seven-eighths of the *sar-kishti* and three-fourths of the *pai-kishti* crop. The straw falls to the share of the cultivator, but his case would be desperate if it were not practicable to bribe the overseer or watchman to let him steal a portion of his own produce. He has also a house to live in; he can keep his cattle on the mountains during summer, can cut wood and bring it to the city for sale, can sell wild greens and butter-milk, and can support himself and his family upon the wild fruits of the forest. Still the cultivators of Kashmir are in a condition of extreme wretchedness and, as if the disproportionate demand of the government was not sufficiently oppressive, the evil is aggravated by the mode adopted in disposing of the government share. It is sent into the market at a high price and no individual is allowed to offer the produce of his farm at a lower rate, or sometimes to dispose of it at all, until the public corn has been sold.[19]

During Colonel Mian Singh's governorship a rough sort of settlement of land was made and according to Sufi, a record of it exists in a manuscript (No. 20) in the State Toshakhana of the former Maharaja of Kapurthala. Besides giving an account of the land and its people the manuscript contains details of revenue from cereals in the 37 Parganas, rates levied on packponies, boats, saffron and *Singhara, Dagshawl* (department of shawls); roads; and *jagirs* or assignments of rajas and keepers of shrines.[20]

In 1822, 2,900,000 rupees were collected as land revenue. But what with the famine of 1832 and the method of collecting and selling the government share of the produce, the amount of revenue declined. In 1835, scarcely any revenue could be collected. In 1836, 23 lakhs of rupees were demanded, but according to Baron Hugel, it was not likely to be raised. In 1838, Ranjit Singh had reduced the demand to 18 lakhs of rupees but it was not possible to enforce even this collection.

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19. Moorcraft, op, cit, p. 125.
20. Sufi, *Kashir.*

Agricultural Production

On account of the general low standard of life and less production of rice, another principal article of food of the common people was the *singhara* or water-nut, which grew abundantly in different lakes of Kashmir. The Wular lake alone "yielded an average return of 96 to 120 thousand ass-loads a year. It constituted almost the only food of at least 30,000 persons for five months a year".

The cultivation of vegetables on floating gardens was carried on very extensively in Kashmir. They yielded cucumbers, melons, watermelons, etc. The price of cucumbers was from ten to 20 for a pice (about the value of a penny).

Wild fruits grew in abundance and many thousands of acres skirting the hills were covered with apple and pear trees and vines in full bearing. These, as well as apricots, peaches, cherries and plums were also cultivated. Numerous walnut trees were planted throughout the Valley and the nuts were retailed in the city for eating at the rate of 100 for 3 pice. Walnuts were chiefly cultivated for the purpose of extracting oil from them. Moorcraft writes:

> The country people break the walnut at home, and carry the kernel alone to market, where it is sold to oil-pressers at the average of seven rupees per *Kharwar,* each *Kharwar* yielding eight *Pajis* (6 seers each) of oil. About twelve thousand *Kharwars* of walnut kernel are annually appropriated to the oil-presses in Kashmir, producing in the gross return of oil and of oil cake, 1,13,000 rupees, independent of the quantity of nuts eaten by man.

Walnut oil was exported to Tibet and used to bring a considerable profit.

Grapes, for wine-making, were cultivated in large quantities. There were about 18 or 20 varieties of grapes in Kashmir of which only four were of foreign introduction. Grapes were gathered in October and were kept through the winter in shallow earthen vessels till spring, when they were applied to the fabrication of wine, vinegar and brandy. The making of wine was discountenanced under the Afghan government, but was revived under that of the Sikhs.

Saffron was cultivated at Pampore. Half of the produce belonged to the State and half to the cultivators. It was exported chiefly to markets in India.

The cotton plant grew in Kashmir in every variety of situation. It was sown in May and cotton was gathered in September and October.

Cloth made from it was in general coarse and flimsy. An attempt was made to introduce the brown cotton from Yarkand, but it failed.

About a thousand *Kharwars* of *Kuth* or Costus, collected in the mountains of Kashmir were annually exported to Amritsar whence the drug was sent to Calcutta for export to China. For what purpose the Chinese used it, was not known, but in northern India it was used as a vermifuge and a cure for chronic rheumatism.

An important rural industry of Kashmir during the period was bee-farming. Every peasant's cottage towards the Lar Pargana and the Lolab valley contained four or five hives, which were managed with very little expense and trouble. Moorcraft is all praise for the Kashmir method of bee-farming, since the present scientific system was then unknown. Honey sold at the price of about three pence a pound, but wax was considerably dearer.

Agricultural industry from every point of view was in a most abject condition; the production was low, the peasants were not allowed to enjoy the fruits of their labour and the state revenue was falling from year to year. There was no regular settlement and the method of collecting revenue was very unjust and, oppressive. The peasants had to live for the most part of the year on *singhara* (water-nut), maize, etc, and their standard of life was very low.

Non-Agricultural Production

The extent of the area of land under forests in Kashmir was much more than it is at the present time. Nearly the whole of the Lolab valley was nothing but forest and similar was the case with the Sindh and the Liddar valleys. The forests were composed generally of deodar, kail and birch trees and the wild fruit trees grew at their skirt.

There was, however, no government machinery for the proper conservation of forests. They were consequently no-man's property. Wood was very cheap and was employed in large quantities for building and other purposes. It was, however, in the Dogra period that proper attention began to be paid to this valuable asset of the country, which yields a large revenue to the government at the present time.

Kashmiris from ancient times are renowned for their skill in the production of various articles which exhibit a very advanced aesthetic sense. In the Mughal period many fine articles like bedsteads, inkstands, pen-cases, etc, were produced in large quantities. The

Afghan rule was nothing but a period of tyranny and despotism and the manufactures for which Kashmir was famous declined. During the Sikh period, however, some of the handicrafts revived and were a source of income to the people and the government.

The papier mache industry was in a flourishing condition. Pen-cases of several varieties were manufactured. Shields, bows and arrows with case, and combs were also made. Every Pandit in former times carried a pen-case in the girdle bound over his *phiran* or garment, or under his armpit, wherever he went. The style of painting on these papier mache articles was sometimes applied to palanquins, elephant *houdas,* and even to the walls and ceilings of rooms.

In the time of the Sikhs, manufacture of paper was carried on very largely near Vicharnag. A good quantity of paper was exported to the Punjab.

The workmen of Kashmir had attained a great skill in the fabrication of gun and pistol barrels, damasked sword blades and shields. Iron, used in these articles, was imported from Bajour.

The carpet-weaving industry originally introduced by Zain-ul-abidin, attained the highest pitch of excellence during the Sikh period. How much proficiency the Kashmiri carpet-weavers had attained in reproducing Nature's lovely sights on their looms during the Sikh rule, will be apparent from the following anecdote taken from Pandit Anand Koul's *Jammu and Kashmir State:*

> Maharaja Ranjit Singh could never visit Kashmir, though he longed to do so and even started from Lahore in 1832 to fulfil his desire, but had to return from Poonch owing to the occurrence of famine in Kashmir then. Once he wrote in a letter to Colonel Mian Singh, one of his governors from 1834 to 1841: 'Would that I could only once in my life enjoy the delight of wandering through the gardens of Kashmir fragrant with almond blossoms, and sitting on the fresh green turf.' The governor in order to gratify, nay, to intensify his master's desire got prepared one fine green carpet, dotted with little pink spots and interspersed with tiny little pearl-like dots, which looked like green turf with pink petals of almond blossoms fallen on it and dew glistening thereon as in spring time. This was a masterpiece of the Kashmir carpet-weaver's art. It was presented to the Maharaja at Lahore; and as soon as he saw it, he was so struck by its beauty of design executed in such artistic excellence that he rolled himself thereon

in ecstasy, feigning to be rolling on the real Kashmir turf. The chief weavers of this exquisite carpet, named Fazal-Jan, Jabbar Khan and Kamal Ju, were given a reward of a pair of golden bracelets each by the Maharaja.

Cotton, as previously noted, was cultivated in Kashmir but the cloth manufactured therefrom was often of a flimsy and coarse kind; one quality, however, called *kadak* being of a texture particularly close though not fine. The manufacture of cotton cloth was not very extensively prosecuted in Kashmir, because its demand was not obviously great, since the major part of the populace wore a *phiran* made of *pattu* for the whole year round.

Silk was produced in a small quantity, but the industry was in a languishing condition. The quantity produced was insufficient even for local consumption.

But the chief article of woollen manufacture which gave employment to thousands of men, women and children, and which was a source of large income to the government, second only to land revenue, was the Kashmir shawl. It was during the Sikh period that Kashmir shawls were sold in thousands to the fashionable world of Europe. The shawl found its way to Europe through a blind man named Sayyid Yahyah who had come from Baghdad as a visitor to Kashmir in 1796 AD in the time of Abdullah Khan, an Afghan governor of Kashmir. When he took leave from the governor, the latter gave him a shawl as a present. The Sayyid having gone to Egypt gave it as a present to the Khedive there. Soon after Nepoleon came to Egypt with his famous fleet and the Khedive gave him this shawl as a present. Napoleon sent it to France and it attracted the fashionable world there. French traders soon came to India and later to Kashmir and exported shawls of various designs to France.

Diwan Kripa Ram was the Sikh governor in 1827 and the shawl trade was in a flourishing condition then, but the terrible famine in 1832 gave a crushing blow to the industry.

The quantity of shawl-wool imported annually varied from 500 to 1,000 *Kharwars*. The wool was formerly supplied almost exclusively by the western provinces of Lhasa and by Ladakh; but in the Sikh period considerable quantities were procured from the neighbourhood of Yarkand, from Khoten and from the families of the Great Khirgis Horde. It was brought chiefly by Mughal merchants who exchanged it for manufactured shawl goods, which they disposed of advantageously in Russia.

The price of shawl-wool in different years was as follows:[21]

1794 — 1807	...	8	rupees per *trak* (6 seers)		
1807 — 1813	...	16 — 20	do.	do.	do.
1813 — 1817	...	22	do.	do.	do.
1817	...	25	do.	do.	do.
1822 onwards	...	40	do.	do.	do.

The increase in the price of shawl-wool was partly due to an epidemic among the shawl-wool goats and partly to the new demand arising for shawl goods from Europe and other distant countries. The spinning of shawl-wool was carried on by women only, who worked from morning till night. The average earnings of an industrious and expert spinner were from 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ rupees, or from 6 to 7 shillings a month, out of which, however, must be deducted the price of the wool (32 *tanqas* equal to 2 rupees) leaving for her labour only one rupee and eight annas.

Numerous varieties of shawls were prepared in Kashmir during the Sikh rule. There were besides, many articles prepared from shawls, namely, *Jamah, dupatta, rumal, shamla,* etc. The price of shawls differed according to the quality of wool, and the number of threads used in a square inch. The price of a plain shawl edged by a single, double or treble border varied from 60 to 2,000 rupees. The price of *Jamawar* varied from 200 to 7,000 rupees.

The whole value of shawl goods manufactured in Kashmir during the earlier part of the Sikh rule might be estimated at 35 lakhs of rupees per annum. The government charged a duty of 26 per cent *ad valorem* and in the time of the Sikh governor, Diwan Kripa Ram, the duty amounted to as much as 12 lakhs of rupees per annum.

Another article of woollen manufacture was *pattu* which was the chief article of clothing of the poorer people.

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21. Moorcraft, op. cit., p. 167.
Besides his political activities Moorcraft engaged himself in finding out the process of manufacture of shawls, so that they might be produced in England. He, therefore, made a thorough study of this art and detailed descriptions of various processes in the making of shawls were sent by him to manufacturers in England. Hence resulted the Paisley shawls, which fulfilled the aims of this enterprising traveller, namely, the complete destruction of this ancient and flourishing industry of Kashmir.

Industrial Organisation

Shawl manufacture which formed the chief industry gave employment to thousands of people. The industry had an elaborate and complex system of division of labour. The wool was spun by women, who sold the twisted yarn to the middleman called *puivango.* The latter sold it to the weaver, who first of all took it to the man whose function it was to apportion the yarn into skeins according to colours. Then the *rangrez* or dyer was employed, who was able to give 64 tints most of which were permanent. The skeins then went to the *nakatu* who adjusted the yarn for the woof and the weft. Then came the turn of the weaver and when the shawl was completed it was taken to the *purzgar* who cleaned it of loose strings and *phiri* or second-wool.

Weaving of shawls which involves a wonderful technical skill was performed in low, dirty rooms of *karkhandars* (manufacturers), accommodating from 3 to 300 weavers. The room was never heated in winter lest the heat destroy the humidity of the air which is so essential to shawl-weaving. The weavers sat on very dirty and torn pieces of matting and awful smell emanated from the room. The weavers were all males, commencing to learn the art at the age of ten.

As regards the weaving of shawls there were always two parties, the master or *ustad* and the scholar or *shahgird,* the former being the capitalist and the latter the workman. Work was executed under four different conditions. Moorcraft writes:

> First for wages, when it almost happens that a system of advances has occurred, by which the workman is so deeply indebted to his employer that he may, in some sort, be considered as his bond-slave. Secondly, upon contract, of which the common term is that one pice is paid for every hundred needles carrying a coloured yarn that shall have been each passed round as many yarns of the warp. Thirdly, a sort of partnership, in which the *ustad* finds all the materials, and the workmen give their labour. When the sowl is sold, the outlay of the *ustad* is deducted from the price, and the remainder is divided into five shares of which one goes to the master and the other four to the workmen. The fourth mode is an equal division of the proceeds, in which case the master not only finds the materials but feeds the workmen."[22]

22. Moorcraft, op. cit., p. 178.

Almost the same kind of organisation prevailed in the carpet industry. But as regards other industries like leather manufacture, the organisation was just as it is at the present time.

Peasant and Labourer

Bearing in mind the wild persecutions of the Pathans from whom the Sikhs wrested the rulership of Kashmir, it is easier to imagine than to describe the wretched condition of the peasantry. The Sikh governors like Diwan Kripa Ram and Colonel Mian Singh tried to alleviate the sufferings of the peasantry but they could not perform the Herculean task of clearing out all the abuses of the revenue and the judicial system of Kashmir. The peasants were thus in a very wretched condition. Moorcraft and Hugel, both of whom visited every part of the Valley, record that many towns and villages wore a dilapidated and half-ruined look. Peasants were migrating in large numbers to the Punjab and the rest of India. There were great hordes of beggars to be found everywhere. In fact whenever Moorcraft or Hugel went out of their place of residence in Srinagar, they used to be surrounded by swarms of half-naked and dirty beggars. The taxation policy of the government was so managed by the employers that its greater burden fell on the weaver. Whether he would work or not, he had to pay the tax and this was ruinous to the shawl-trade. By attempting to wrest all the profit from the labourer, the employer overreached himself and killed the industry. The shawl-weaver was considered an inferior order of creation.

When this was the condition of the labourers in the shawl trade which was in a flourishing condition, one can easily deduce the condition of labourers in other industries. In short, the peasants and the labourers lived from hand to mouth and the fruits of their labour were snatched away from them chiefly by the employer and to some extent by the government.

Commerce

Nearly all the imports and exports from and to the Punjab and other parts of India passed through the Pir Panjal and Banihal passes. The Jhelum valley route on account of political disturbances was closed to all trade. The shawl-wool trade with Tibet and the shawl trade with Russia passed through the Ladakh and Gilgit routes.

The principal markets for the products of Kashmir were the whole of India, China, Russia, and the European countries like England, France, etc. Baron Hugel, when he visited Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore, saw all his courtiers wearing magnificent and costly shawls of Kashmir. *Kuth* or Costus, extracted from the forests of Kashmir, was exported to China. The principal articles of import consisted of shawl-wool, salt, sugar, a small quantity of cotton cloth, iron for damasked sword blades, condiments, and gold and silver.

The chief markets of internal trade were different towns like Anantnag, Shahabad, Baramula, Sopore, etc. Each town was, moreover, noted for some manufacture of its own, for example, *gubbas* or woollen carpets were manufactured at Anantnag, *pattu* at Sopore, and so on. The internal trade of the country was carried on by means of boats and beasts of burden. All kind of wheeled traffic was unknown. There were only footpaths throughout the country; and in the city and towns the streets were so narrow that two persons could with difficulty walk abreast.

Standard of Life

From the account given above one cannot but deduce that the general standard of life of the Kashmiris under the Sikh Government was very low. The dress of the people, their dwellings, in fact, their every article of necessity were far from desirable. Both men and women wore a long and loose garment (*phiran*) made of coarse *pattu* cloth. This garment was very occasionally, if at all, washed and formed both the winter and the summer dress. A good number of people could not even afford this and they went about in tattered and dirty rags.

On the other hand the aristocracy composed chiefly of some Sikh *Sirdars,* the capitalists or *karkhandars* and some families of the Kashmiri Pandits, lived in a very pompous and luxurious style. They had palaces to live in, which contained very costly pieces of furniture like carpets, wall hangings, papier mache articles, etc. A wealthy *karkhandar* used to feed 200 poor people every day. When an aristocrat had to go about in the city, he was followed by a number of servants and his boat was rowed by a large number of boatmen, and even sometimes by pretty boatwomen, on whose wrists jingles were tied which produced a very pleasant sound when the boat was paddeled.

The standard of life among the middle class people like the Kashmiri Pandits was also very low. A picture of Srinagar has already been given where the Pandits formed a good proportion of the population and from it we cannot get any good impression of their general standard of life. The Pandits wore the usual *phiran* with a girdle of cloth round their waist, under which they carried the *qalamdan* or pen-case. They had rarely a second change of clothing and it was not unusual for a Pandit to apply for, and be given, leave for a day or two to wash his *phiran* and turban. The food of the middle class consisted of rice, mutton, fish and various vegetables.

The food of the majority of the people consisted of boiled rice and vegetables, but not a small number lived on *singhara* (water-nut), maize and barley. Moorcraft records that *singhara* comprised almost the only food for at least 30,000 people for five months in the year and the *nadru* or the lotus stem of about 5,000 people in the city for nearly eight months. This is a striking proof of the poverty and low standard of life among the lower class people.

Peasants lived in dwellings which were worse than cow-sheds of this day. Even the best house in the Lolab valley could afford no better shelter in rain than a chenar tree. These huts were made like log cabins and were covered with mud plaster. Moorcraft's description of a typical village in the Lolab valley runs as follows:

> The people of Sugam were almost in a savage state. The men were in general tall and robust; the women haggard and ill-looking. The houses were mostly constructed of small trees, coarsely dove-tailed together and coated with rough plaster inside. A flat planking was laid over the top, resting on the walls, and above that a sloping roof was constructed, open at the ends, the space being either filled with dry grass, or serving to give shelter to poultry. The interior was divided by partitions of wickerwork, plastered into three or four dirty small apartments.

Vigne's description is hardly more favourable. He visited Kashmir in 1835. Shopyan was a "miserable place, bearing the impression of once having been a thriving town. The houses were in ruins." Anantnag was "but a shadow of its former self." The houses presented "a ruined and neglected appearance, in wretched contrast with their once gay and happy condition." The villages had fallen into decay. The rice fields remained uncultivated for want of labour and irrigation.

18

GULAB SINGH AND HIS SUCCESSORS

Picturesquely situated on the summit of the first sloping ridge that rises from the plains of the Punjab, Jammu, the winter capital of the State, has a history dating back to the epic and Puranic periods.

From olden times it has been the seat of a Rajput dynasty which ruled over a small principality extending over a few miles around it. The two lakes, Mansar and Siroinsar, a little to the east of the city, have given to its inhabitants the name 'Dogra', a corruption of the Sanskrit 'Dogirath' (two lakes). Jammu, however, appears to have been the most important and influential of the 22 tiny Dogra states which comprised the hilly country extending from the plains of the Punjab to the snowy range of mountains bounding the Kashmir Valley on the south, and now known as the Jammu Province.

These Dogra principalities are said to have been founded by Rajput adventurers from Oudh and Delhi, about the time of Alexander's invasion, when they moved up north to oppose the Greeks.

Jammu Through the Centuries

The earliest mention of Jammu in recorded history is in connection with Timur's invasion in 1398 AD. At that time these petty principalities were engaged in quarrels among themselves, but they combined against Timur's forces, who, however, drove them into the hills. During the Mughal period, these Dogra chiefs appear to have carried on as feudatories of the emperors, retaining a large measure of freedom in the management of their fiefs. Of Sangram Dev, *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri* contains several references, one of which mentions him as "the Raja of Jammu having a *mansab* of 1,500 personnel and 1,000 horse."

After a varied fortune, the principality of Jammu had, by about

1760, acquired a fairly stable government under an enlightened ruler, Raja Ranjit Dev, a Dogra prince who succeeded to the throne in 1750, and continued to hold prominence in the politics of Jammu and outside for 31 years.

With the decline of the Mughal empire and the consequent political chaos, the Punjab and adjoining areas were the victims of marauding hordes, and there was no security of life and property. Ahmad Shah Abdali's repeated invasions from the north and the Maratha incursions from the south reduced the 'land of the five rivers' to the plight of a no-man's land. This gave an opportunity to Ranjit Dev to extend his authority over all the hill states situated between the Chenab and the Ravi and also over some that lay to the west of the Chenab. His kingdom extended to the plains bordering northern Sialkot.

In pursuance of his objective of carving out an independent State free from Mughal domination, he did not hesitate to extend his active support and help to Ahmad Shah Abdali against Raja Sukh Jiwan. In return Ahmad Shah gave him a *jagir*.[1]

Raja Ranjit Dev

Towards the end of his rule Ranjit Dev had acquired sufficient strength to seriously consider an invasion of the Kashmir Valley. Haji Karim Dad's tyrannical rule had goaded the people of the Valley to seek aid to overthrow him, from whichever quarter it could be procured. A few members of the leading Kanth family, as well as the chiefs of the Khakha and Bomba tribes of the Baramula valley, sent secret emissaries to Ranjit Dev, promising him active aid if he attempted an invasion. In 1779, while Haji Karim Dad was busy subjugating Skardu, Ranjit Dev launched an attack over the Banihal pass. Karim Dad's Afghan forces, however, got timely intelligence and ambushed the invaders, so that Ranjit Dev's army had to retreat in disorder.

Ranjit Dev gave an orderly and peaceful administration to his subjects at a time when all around was chaos and insecurity. Jammu thus became a centre of entrepot trade between the Kashmir Valley, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, and the rest of India. Rich bankers and businessmen from Lahore and Delhi set up their branches there, and very soon Jammu acquired an importance and prosperity that it

1. Sufi, *Kashir*, p. 755.

had never experienced before.[2]

The independence of Jammu under Raja Ranjit Dev was, however, short-lived. It was overwhelmed by the rising power of the Sikhs. In 1780, one of the leaders of the Bhangi *misl*, Jhanda Singh, led a strong army against Ranjit Dev, and retired only after extracting tribute from the Jammu ruler.

Ranjit Dev was unfortunate in respect of his sons. The eldest, Brij Raj Dev, was of dissolute character and,in order to save the kingdom from falling into his unworthy hands, he nominated his second son, Dalil Singh, as his successor. Brij Raj Dev approached the leader of Sukarchakia *misl* Charat Singh, for help, who while leading an assault on Ranjit Dev's forces, was killed by the bursting of his matchlock. The rival *misl* of Bhangis who were aiding the Raja, also lost their leader, Jhanda Singh, who was shot dead by the partisans of the Sukarchakia *misl* while riding in the camp. His death ended their quarrel, and the rival forces retired from Jammu.

Jammu Under Sikh Rule

After Ranjit Dev's death, Brij Raj Dev could not hold against the rising power of the Sikhs for long. Mahan Singh, father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who had succeeded to the leadership of the Sukarchakia *misl*, at first became friendly with the new Jammu ruler. Fortified by this alliance he thought he might regain some of his estates lost to the Bhangi *sirdars* but who, on being attacked, secured the help of the

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2. George Forster who happened to stay in Jammu in 1783 AD observes:

   Runzeid Deve, the father of the present chief of Jumbo, who deservedly acquired the character of a just and wise ruler, largely contributed to the wealth and importance of Jumbo. Perceiving the benefits that would arise from the residence of Muhammadan merchants, he held out to them many encouragements and observed towards them a disinterested and honourable conduct.......The Chief of Jumbo went farther than the forbearance of injuries: he avowedly protected and indulged his people, particularly the Muhammadans, to whom he allotted a certain quarter of the town which was thence denominated Mughalpur ; and that no reserve might appear in his treatment of them, a mosque was erected in the new colony.......He was so desirous also of acquiring their confidence and esteem that when he was riding through their quarter during the time of prayer, he never failed to stop his horse until the priest had concluded his ritual exclamations. An administration so munificent and judicious at the same time that it enforces the respect of the subjects, made Jumbo a place of extensive commercial resort, where all descriptions of men experienced, in their persons and property, a full security.

Kanheya *misl*. Mahan Singh attacked their camp, but he was defeated and along with Brij Raj Dev compelled to pay tribute. Some months later the two rivals combined in attacking Jammu on the pretext of the tribute having fallen in arrears. Mahan Singh forgetting his vows of friendship to both Brij Raj and his new ally the Kanheya chieftain, sacked Jammu and retired with great spoil. Brij Raj Devhad to submit and pay an annual tribute of 50,000 rupees. He continued to maintain the semblance of government but his hold on the hilly districts of the interior disappeared. On his death he was succeeded by his one-year-old child Sampuran Dev, under the guardianship of Mian Mota, a cousin of Brij Raj Dev. Sampuran Singh died at the age of 11 and was succeeded by Jit Singh,the son of Brij Raj Dev's younger brother, Dalil Singh.

Raja Jit Singh proved to be an incompetent man, and his wife who was an ambitious and intriguing lady, took the management of affairs in her own hands. Finding the small State torn by internal dissensions, Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered in 1803 Bhai Hukum Singh his trusted lieutenant, to reduce Jammu and annex it to the Sikh State and thus the whole province came directly under the Lahore Government. It was only 12 years later that the Jammu principality was retrieved by another scion of the family — Raja Gulab Singh who, with his remarkable bravery in the field and diplomatic skill, slowly built up Jammu, extending its frontiers far into the east and north of the Valley, and after incorporating the latter into his dominions founded the present State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharaja Gulab Singh

At about the time when Jammu finally passed into the hands of Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh , a young boy of 16, left his ancestral home in Jammu to seek his fortune by the prowess of his sword. Gulab Singh, the adventurous youth, was the son of Mian Kishore Singh who lived mainly on his *jagir* near Samba, 24 miles to the south of Jammu city. Mian Kishore was the grandson of Surat Dev, a younger brother of Ranjit Dev who had two more sons, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh.

Gulab Singh was born in 1792 and early in his childhood was sent to live with his grandfather, a stern old warrior, who gave him a thorough training in all manly arts. He could at an early age ride a horse like a cavalry trooper and wield his sword with deadly effect.

He was also a sharp and accurate marksman.

After taking service under a Jagirdar, Gulab Singh went to Lahore in 1809 where he was taken into Ranjit Singh's service as the commander of a small force. It was the year when Ranjit Singh signed the famous treaty with the British at Amritsar. Thenceforth he launched several campaigns against the Afghans and in these Gulab Singh distinguished himself as a military leader and fearless warrior. In the ill-fated expedition of 1814 against Fateh Khan,the Afghan governor of Kashmir, Gulab Singh's regiment played a prominent part. While the Sikhs were retreating ignominiously, Gulab Singh showed the greatest courage in reassembling his forces and bringing them back safely. Next year at the siege of Jullundur he distinguished himself and was given additional *jagirs*. At the siege of Multan, Gulab Singh's personal bravery in recovering the dead body of a Ranjit's favourite *sirdar* in the thick of fighting, won him praise and admiration from his master. Gulab Singh thus became one of the most trusted generals of Ranjit Singh. Dhyan Singh too rose in his favour and was appointed to the important post of Grand Chamberlain, which gave him great influence over the Maharaja.

At this time the forces of Ranjit Singh were being terrorised in the Jammu district by the intrepid chief called Mian Dido. Receiving tacit support from other Jammu chiefs and their Dogra followers, Mian Dido attacked the Sikh garrison in the Jammu fort. Several expeditions were sent against him, but to no effect. Finally Gulab Singh took upon himself the difficult task of ridding the Sikh ruler of this headache. He was promised Jammu in *jagir* if he succeeded in his mission. Gulab Singh began by punishing the villagers who gave support to Mian Dido and finally drove him to the peak of a hill where he was surrounded by Gulab Singh's soldiers who shot him dead.

This act of great military pluck and wise strategy convinced Ranjit Singh of his being the fittest man to pacify the unruly and difficult province of Jammu. In 1820, therefore, the province was given to Gulab Singh in farm. But on Gulab Singh's representation that it was impossible to collect the revenues without the use of force, he was permitted to keep an army of his own and given the title of Raja.

In 1821 Gulab Singh effected the conquest of Kishtwar more by diplomacy than by the strength of arms. He created dissensions bet-

ween the ruler and his wise minister, *Wazir* Lakhpat. The latter escaped to Bhadarwah and Gulab Singh conquered Kishtwar with ease.

Ranjit Singh also entrusted to him the reduction of Rajauri which was under the rule of a Muslim dynasty of Rajput descent. The Raja had deliberately given a wrong advice to Ranjit Singh in his first invasion of Kashmir. Gulab Singh undertook the assignment promptly and succeeded in capturing the Raja.

All these distinguished services to the Lahore Government, were rewarded by the Maharaja with the grant to Gulab Singh and his successors of the principality of Jammu, with the hereditary title of Raja. The installation ceremony at Akhnur, 18 miles to the west of Jammu was presided over by the Maharaja who personally put the saffron *Rajtilak* on Gulab Singh's forehead.

Once installed at Jammu, Gulab Singh preferred to spend most of his time there, using the Sikh means to extend his own authority over his Rajput brothers and eventually over Ladakh. He was fortified by Dhyan Singh remaining continually in attendance upon the Maharaja, ever watchful of his interests. He was a strong ruler and quickly restored order in his State, and with his close, personal supervision of the collection of revenues and their expenditure and his check over the officials, prosperity returned to the land. He could thus plan expeditions towards the distant mountainous areas of Ladakh and Baltistan.

Most of the credit for the conquest of these important frontier regions goes to his able and devoted general, *Wazir* Zorawar Singh. Born in a village in the Riasi district of Jammu, Zorawar began his career as a private soldier and being energetic and brave came to the notice of the commandant who sent him to Gulab Singh. On one occasion he brought to the notice of his master the waste occurring in the Commissariat Department and placed before him a scheme by which considerable saving could be effected. This brought him closer to Gulab Singh who entrusted him with the conduct of several campaigns which proved his talent as a commander and scrupulously honest officer.

Gulab Singh's conquest of Kishtwar enabled him to gauge the strength of his troops in mountain warfare, and to equip them accordingly. When he was free from internal troubles, and order in Jammu was completely restored he decided in 1834 to attack Ladakh. He made a confidential enquiry from the Company, and, on being

informed that the British Government had no objection to his expedition, a well-equipped force was prepared under General Zorawar Singh for this purpose.

Conquest of Ladakh

Marching through Kishtwar, the Dogras fought the first battle in the Pushkyun valley where the Ladakhis were defeated. Mustering an army of 15,000 the ladakhis again marched down to attack the Dogras near Langkartze between Kargil and Suru, but on the approach of Zorawar Singh's forces they fled. They were pursued up to Leh where king Gyalpo frantically requested a British traveller, Henderson, to intervene on his behalf and secure aid for him from the British. But a sharp protest by Ranjit Singh (the overlord of Gulab Singh) to the British resulted in their total refusal of any aid to the Ladakhi king, who had to surrender and pay an indemnity of 50,000 rupees and a yearly tribute of 20,000 rupees to the Dogra chief.

The subjugation of Ladakh was followed in 1841 by that of Baltistan. Zorawar Singh who was ever on the lookout for extending his conquests, received a call for help from one of the sons of the ruler of Baltistan who had been deprived of his right of succession by his father. Zorawar at once prepared for an invasion and enlisting a force of Ladakhis sent them under their own generals into Baltistan by the Chorbat pass and Khapalu. Zorawar himself led his own Dogra force by the Dras and Indus valleys. He had to suffer great hardship in crossing the Indus, but with his persevering nature, he ultimately succeeded in not only crossing it, but enveloping the Balti forces from their rear. The siege of the fort, where the enemy forces had taken their stand, lasted a fortnight and deprived of their water supply the Baltis soon surrendered and Zorawar Singh deposed the king, installing the disgruntled prince as the Raja. The Sikh governors of Kashmir had always been jealous of Gulab Singh's successes in Ladakh, but "Mian Singh, a rude soldier, the governor of the Valley during the commotions at Lahore, was alarmed into concessions by the powerful and ambitious Rajas of Jammu, and he left Iskardu and whole valley of the Upper Indus, a free field for the aggressions of their lieutenants."[3]

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3. Cunningham, A *History of the Sikhs*, p. 217.
Sir Claude Wade (*Narrative of Services* p.33, note) represents the Jammu family to have obtained from the British Government an assurance that the limitations put upon Sikh conquests to the west and south by the Tripartite Treaty of 1839, would not be held to apply to the north or Tibetan side in which direction, it was said, the Sikhs were free to act as they might please.

In 1841, Zorawar with a force of 5,000 troops marched towards Lhasa to conquer the whole of Tibet. Having overrun the two provinces of Rudok and Gar and proceeded 12 marches inside the Tibetan territory, he was halted. These two provinces which produce the finest wool of Tibet also contained the wealthiest and most sacred of its monasteries held by the Buddhist ruler of Tibet as his most valued possessions. Zorawar by attempting their conquest excited the wrath of the Lhasa Government who were able to put more than 10,000 men in the field. At the time of invasion by the Dogras, the Tibetan governor fled to Chang Thong, leaving the post of Rudok and the whole country at the mercy of the invaders. General Zorawar Singh established himself at the sacred Lake Mapham (Mansarowar) and sent detachments all over the country to pillage and one body of troops he posted at Purang to watch the Lhasa forces. These forces now marched on Rudok. Zorawar Singh whose contempt for the Tibetan soldiery was great and who underrated the strength of the army opposed to him, sent some small detachments of his troops to oppose its advance. These were cut to pieces. The Tibetans, inhabitants of a cold region, had a great advantage over the Dogras of the hot plains of the Punjab. On 12 December, 1841 when the Dogras at a height of 15,000 feet were losing their hands and feet from frostbite and were burning their gunstocks for lack of fuel, the Tibetans under General Shatra — a member of the family that had been famous in Tibetan Annals for the past 100 years — delivered an assault, mercilessly killing their enemy. Zorawar fought at the head of his troops, was unhorsed, and wounded by a bullet. He continued to fight gallantly till killed by a spear thrust. Only 25 soldiers of his army returned to Kashmir to tell this sad tale. It is, however, noteworthy, that the 700 prisoners were treated well at Lhasa, except one Muslim, Ghulam Khan, who had been prominent in the destruction of images and monasteries during the earlier phase of the Dogra incursion.[4]

But Gulab Singh did not accept this defeat as final. Next year a punitive force of 6,000 troops under the command of Diwan Hari Chand and *Wazir* Ratnu was sent to reconquer Ladakh which had been reoccupied by the Tibetan forces after the defeat of Zorawar Singh. The Maharaja came personally to direct the operations and

4. Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past & Present.*
It is interesting to note that at about this time a similar tragedy occurred to the British forces stationed in Kabul, after the 1st Afghan War.

established his rear headquarters at Nasim Bagh near Srinagar. It may be recalled that the Valley had not come under his rule till then and he was conducting all these operations in the name of the Lahore Government.

After a skirmish at Skardu the Dogra force advanced to Leh where the enemy under the command of Achhanjut and Karam Shah gave battle but were badly mauled by the Dogras. Achhanjut was taken prisoner and brought to Srinagar before Gulab Singh. Negotiations were opened with the Tibetans and finally a treaty was signed whereby the old frontiers were agreed to be the boundary line between Tibet and Gulab Singh's dependency of Ladakh; and the traders of both the countries were granted reciprocal concessions.[5] Achhanjut was set free and sent to Lhasa with presents for the court there.

But although Ladakh came permanently under the Dogras as a result of this treaty the pacification of the vast areas took a considerable time. The intrigues of the Lhasa Government to foment trouble for the Dogras continued up to as late as 1891 and the Maharaja's Government had to keep a strict watch over the movement of the Lamas across the various passes.

British Interference in Ladakh

Long before Kashmir came under the rule of the Dogras in 1846, the British had cast their covetous eyes on the territories lying beyond it. As early as 1774 Warren Hastings while sending Mr Bogle to Tibet on an exploring and political mission, had under Article 7 of his secret commission directed him to find out the political and commercial relations then existing between Kashmir and Tibet.[6]

A year after the Sikh conquest of Kashmir in 1819 two enterprising British travellers, Moorcraft and Trebeck, visited Ladakh ostensibly to study the wool trade of Tibet, but actually to gain some first-hand information and if possible a foothold for their countrymen there. Describing this event the Ladakh native chroniclers mention

5. J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*.
At Amritsar in March 1846, when Gulab Singh was finally inaugurated as Maharaja of Jammu, he exhibited the engagements with the Lama of Lhasa drawn out on his part in yellow and on the part of the Chinese in red ink and each impressed with the open hand of the negotiators dipped in either colour instead of a regular seal or written signature.
6. C.R. Markham, *Narrative of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet*, p. 8.

that these two 'Sahibs' came to Ladakh via Kulu and Lahoul and gave rich presents to the people and the noblemen and sought an audience with the king. The request for an audience was granted after a long delay. They evinced an interest in the people and their mode of living; and warning the king that the Sikhs would soon attack Ladakh, advised him to establish friendly relations with the British and allow them to build a fort in Leh. The king got suspicious and courteously refused their offer. Moorcraft and Trebeck remained in Ladakh for a year and then returned to India without having achieved any political objective.[7] Soon after in 1834 another British traveller, Henderson, reached Leh and was kept as a hostage by the king impressing thereby the Dogra general Zorawar Singh that he was in direct touch with the British.

The conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan by Gulab Singh though looked upon with disfavour by the British brought the boundaries of the Raja up to the Tibetan frontiers. The British had been powerless to check him but when in 1841 Gulab Singh sent his forces into Tibet, a great stir was caused in Calcutta and the British Indian Government looked apprehensively on the increasing power and prestige of the Dogra chief.[8] They sent a strong note to the Sikh Government at Lahore saying therein that they believed Ngari Khorsum to "belong to China and hearing of the invasion of the territories by the Dogras, they had decided that the Dogras should evacuate the territories they had seized in order to avoid complications with the Chinese Government." Accordingly 10 December 1841 was fixed for the surrender. A British officer, Captain J.D. Cunningham, was sent to see that the decision was carried out and Zorawar Singh was accordingly recalled. But before the order could reach him he and his forces had been annihilated by the Tibetans.[9]

In 1846 when as a result of the treaty of Amritsar, Gulab Singh was made the absolute master of Jammu and Kashmir state, it seemed to the British that the hope of plunder and "the desire of revenge might tempt him to repeat the expedition of 1841 into Lhasa territory". The British thought that such an act would embarrass their

7. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet.*
8. His fame travelled to far off corners of Central Asia. Abdul Rahim Khan, Raja of Badakshan, addressed a *murasala* to Gulab Singh describing the riches of Badakshan; and expressing his desire to enter into friendly alliance with the Maharaja Sahib — *Kashmir Govt. Rec.* File No. 47.
9. J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 256-58.

peaceful relations with the government of His Celestial Majesty due to the latter's ignorance of any distinction between the rulers of India and Kashmir. Accordingly they pressed the Maharaja to delineate once for all the boundary line between his and Tibetan territories and despatched Alexander Cunningham to carry out this work. The latter stayed on in Ladakh for a considerable time carrying out geographical, ethnic, mineral and philological surveys of the whole district. He also kept a close watch on the happenings on the other side of the Karakoram range and collected valuable information of political and geographical nature from the various travellers to Central Asia and Tibet. But Gulab Singh would not tolerate his presence there for long and he had to return.

Founding of Jammu and Kashmir State

With the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan, Gulab Singh's dominions enveloped the Kashmir Valley from the south and the east, and he thus became the sole controller of trade in shawl wool on which the economy of Kashmir depended. He had for long cast covetous eyes on the Valley and when in 1841 he was deputed to restore order following the assassination of the governor, Mian Singh, by the mutinous Sikh troops, he, by installing Ghulam Mohi-ud-din as governor made him a creature of his own, and punished the mutinous regiments with such severity that he became the virtual master of the Valley. From then onwards his sole aim was to acquire its possession in fact and in law, and thus become the ruler of a consolidated State on the frontiers of India.

At Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, the three brothers from Jammu were at the height of their power. Dhyan Singh was the Dewan at Lahore; Gulab Singh controlled all the hilly country inhabited by the Dogras; and Suchet Singh was the Commander of a large Sikh force. All the brothers played a prominent role in the tragic drama that was being enacted at Lahore, after Ranjit Singh's stern hand was removed by Death.

Kharak Singh who succeeded his father to the throne of the Punjab appointed Dhyan Singh as his chief minister. But soon the new Maharaja came under the baneful influence of his favourite, Chet Singh. Dhyan Singh and Gulab Singh not willing to be overshadowed by the court favourite killed him in the presence of his patron. This, however, did not improve matters for them, as Nao Nihal Singh, the new Maharaja's son, dominated over his father. Both he and

Kharak Singh made an exit from the stage, the Maharaja dying of his excesses on 5 November 1840, and his young son the same day by an accident.

At once several rival claimants to the throne clamoured for recognition and sought the help of the the Jammu brothers. Whereas Dhyan Singh favoured Sher Singh, reputed son of Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh took the side of Kharrak Singh's widow, Chand Kaur. After a bitter fight in which Gulab Singh distinguished himself by organising the defence of Lahore against Sher Singh's forces, a compromise was effected between the rival claimants. Gulab Singh marched out of Lahore and went to Jammu to look after his State.

> In 1841 disaster overtook the British arms in Afghanistan. The garrison at Jalalabad was being besieged, and to relieve it a British force was equipped at Peshawar. The cooperation of the Sikhs was necessary. To obtain this, Major (later Sir Henry) Lawrence was sent to Peshawar. To cooperate with the British expedition which was being organised on the frontier, the Lahore Government very reluctantly deputed Gulab Singh, who was at that time at Hazara.[10] Here he took the fullest advantage of his powerful position and the distress of the British, and ingratiated himself with Sir Henry Lawrence, in the hope of securing British help in acquiring an independent status for his newly formed State of Jammu. Being a far-sighted politician, he visualised the early breakup of the Sikh State, and its annexation by the British, and rendered valuable services to the expedition for which he earned the gratitude of the British.

The Lahore Government fell into disorder following the death of Chand Kaur in 1842. Sher Singh who was now without a rival to his authority was chaffing under the domination of Dyan Singh. The faction inimical both to Sher Singh and his minister, fanned the fire of hatred between the two with the result that both Sher Singh and Dhyan Singh were killed. The partisans of Jammu rajas prepared for war under Suchet Singh, and Hira Singh caught hold of the murderers and despatched them to death, and put Duleep Singh another reputed son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, on the throne.

But after some initial successes in gaining control over the turbulent army of the Sikhs, Suchet and Hira Singh also met their death at the hands of an assassin. Rani Jindan and her paramour, Lal Singh,

10. Panikkar, *Founding of the Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 49.

now controlled the destinies of the Lahore Government. An army was sent to crush Gulab Singh, and though he resisted the Sikh forces for some time, he had to submit himself and was imprisoned at Lahore. But with his popularity among the troops, he escaped and fled to Jammu, from where surrounded by his loyal servants and troops, he watched the fast moving political drama being staged at Lahore.

How the Rani Jindan and Lal Singh pushed the Sikh army into war against the British is well known to every student of Indian history. Gulab Singh, however, had no hand in these moves, and although invited by the Rani to lead the Sikh army, he declined the offer on the plea that the Lahore Government had been harsh on him and his family, having been responsible for the murder of his brothers and nephews.

Transfer of Kashmir to Gulab Singh

"When, however, the campaign was going against the Sikhs and the demand for his return was unanimous, Gulab Singh arrived in Lahore."[11] He realised the dark consequences of the war for the Sikhs and immediately entered into negotiations with the British Government with a view to securing as honourable a peace as possible before it became too late. The battle of Sobraon, fought on 10 February 1846, was the most fiercely contested battle that the British had ever fought in India, and though the British victory was decisive, they suffered heavy casualties. They were, therefore, also anxious to bring about a negotiated peace. At the same time they realised the necessity of conciliating Gulab Singh who had a fresh and disciplined force of Dogras under his command, which if brought into action against them would have proved disastrous to their interests.

Sir Henry Lawrence, therefore, sent a cryptic note to Gulab Singh to meet him at once. When they met, Lawrence told Gulab Singh "that the Governor-General had promised to grant him the hilly district, together with the country of Kashmir, after having separated them from the Government of the Punjab, and that Gulab Singh would be recognised as an independent ruler."[12]

Gulab Singh continued the negotiations on behalf of the Lahore Government and succeeded to secure for Duleep Singh "what was in the circumstances a reasonably moderate treaty. Known to history as

11. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 92.
12. Ibid, p. 96.

the treaty of Lahore, and signed on the 9 March 1846, it contained a clause to the following effect:

> In consideration of the services rendered by Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu to the Lahore State towards procuring the restoration of the relations of amity between the Lahore and British Governments, the Maharaja hereby agrees to recognise the independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja Gulab Singh by separate agreement between himself and the British Government with dependencies thereof which may have been in the Raja's possession since the time of Maharaja Kharrak Singh; and the British Government, in consideration of the good conduct of Raja Gulab Singh, also agrees to recognise his independence in such territories and to admit him to the privilege of a separate treaty with the British Government.

This separate treaty was signed at Amritsar on 16 March, 1846, between Maharaja Gulab Singh and the British Government. According to clause I of the treaty, the British Government "transfers and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and westward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March 1846." In consideration of this transfer the Maharaja had to pay to the British Government "the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (Nanukshahee)." Thus it was not only Kashmir Valley that was transferred to Maharaja Gulab Singh but the entire "hilly country situated to the eastward of river Indus and westward of the river Ravi" that is, the area ceded to the British by the Lahore court. Since it was difficult for the British to annex it to their territory, they transferred it to Gulab Singh in lieu of rupees seventy-five lakhs which the Sikh Durbar had to pay the British in ransom. There was, therefore, no question of the 'sale' of the Valley to Gulab Singh by the British. The Maharaja became, according to another Article of the Treaty, a vassal of the British and in acknowledgement of their supremacy had to pay a token tribute.

Thus it was that Kashmir came under the rule of Maharaja Gulab Singh. "Surprise has often been expressed," writes Younghusband,

"that when this lovely land had actually been ceded to us, after a hard and strenuous campaign, we should ever have parted with it for the paltry sum of three-quarters of a million sterling." The reasons are to be found in a letter from Sir Henry Hardinge to Queen Victoria. The Governor-General writing from a place near Lahore, nearly three weeks before the signing of the Treaty, said that it appeared to him desirable "to weaken the Sikh State, which has proved itself too strong" by making arrangements by which "Cashmere may be added to the possessions of Gulab Singh, declaring the Rajput Hill States with Cashmere independent of the Sikhs of the Plains." In 1846 all that the East India Company wished was to curb their powerful neighbours, and they thought they would do it best by depriving the Sikhs of the hilly country, and by handing it over to a ruler of a different caste.

But although Gulab Singh became the nominal ruler of Kashmir, he did not get actual possession of his new province without difficulty. His forces sent under the command of *Wazir* Lakhpat were opposed by the Sikh troops of the governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-din. A battle was fought at the foot of the Sankaracarya hill in which *Wazir* Lakhpat was killed, and his followers forced to take shelter behind the ramparts of the Hari Parbat Fort. On hearing this Gulab Singh appealed to the British for help and a force was despatched under Sir Henry Lawrence to help him to establish his rule in Kashmir. On learning of British help to Gulab Singh, Imam-ud-din left the Valley along with his troops, and would have been severely punished by the British in Lahore, had he not produced the written instructions to him from Lal Singh to oppose Gulab Singh's forces in Kashmir. Lal Singh was forthwith dismissed from the chief ministership and sent to Ludhiana under heavy guard.

The Kashmiris, however, were not strangers to the Dogras. Mention of close contacts between the people and rulers of Jammu and of the Kashmir Valley is often made in the *Rajatarangini*. During the time of the Sultans, Jammu and adjacent territories had political relations with Kashmir and their rulers entered into matrimonial relations with one another. Sultan Ali Shah (1413-20), for instance, was married to a daughter of the ruler of Jammu. Zain-ul-abidin's (1420-70) second wife was a Jammu princess and she bore him four sons. During the popular movement in Kashmir against the domination of the Sayyids, a contingent of Jammu soldiers under their ruler came to their help. Under the Mughals there developed closer relations between the

people of Jammu and Kashmir Valley, inasmuch as the most important trade routes between Kashmir and Delhi passed over the Pir Panjal and Banihal passes. And when the Kashmiris were groaning under the tyrannical rule of the Afghans, Jammu offered a place of refuge to the thousands of harassed Kashmiris fleeing from the inhuman treatment of their masters.

Gulab Singh's Regime

Conditions prevailing in Kashmir when Gulab Singh took it over were deplorable. The Sikh rule had not appreciably improved the lot of the people and the last five years of their regime, due to weakening control of their Central Government, proved to be ruinous to the people. Petty intrigues and quarrels as between the governor and the military commander encouraged the officials to freely tyrannise over the common people and amass wealth quickly. There was no security of service, appointments and dismissals of officers following in quick succession. The rule of the last governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-din was the worst of all. He was a weak ruler whose one aim in remaining at the head of the administration was to amass a huge fortune. Diwan Kripa Ram a former governor used to remit 20 lakhs of rupees to the Lahore Court, but this sum fell to only six lakhs during Sheikh Imam-ud-din's time. His habit of issuing contradictory orders has become proverbial.

As can well be imagined, the economic chaos in the land prevailed to the utmost. Baron Schonberg who visited the Valley at this time gives a sad picture of the people. The tiller of the soil paid heavily in taxes. The artisans and weavers of shawls were in an equally miserable condition. The daily wages of a shawl-weaver were four annas, of which half was taken by the governor in taxes, and for the remaining two annas, he was paid in kind (*singhara* or paddy) from the government depot at a very much enhanced rate than prevailing in the open market. A shawl-weaver was forbidden by law to change his employer, the *karkhandar* or proprietor of the factory.

Cultivation of land had fallen to the minimum. The people already decimated by the famines of 1832 and 1838, continued to emigrate to Amritsar and Ludhiana, even though there were stringent restrictions on the free movement of people across the passes. The common people lived mostly on *singhara*, the water chestnut, which grew naturally on the various lakes of Kashmir, but which also was subjected to an iniquitous tax. The Sikh soldiery whose pay was always

in arrears added to the annoyance of the Kashmiris.

At this time the shawl trade was at its zenith. The shawl had become an article of fashion in Europe, particularly in France, and enormous quantities were exported by rich *karkhandars* through their agents in Lahore and Calcutta. Even "General Ventura once traded in these shawls and had great numbers woven"— so lucrative was this trade. Consequently, the number of people employed in the manufacture of shawls was very large and on it depended the economy of the country. The miserable condition of the shawl-weavers and other artisans is, therefore, a clear mirror of the low economic conditions prevailing in the whole of the State.

All land virtually belonged to the Sikh ruler but for the sake of popularity some of the governors signed away large *jagirs* to their favourites at court. Sheikh Imam-ud-din was the worst offender in this respect. He freely bestowed lands in *jagir* to his minions, taking large sums from them as *nazrana* or tribute. The condition of poor tillers can well be imagined than described. A cultivator, for instance, who wished to rent and cultivate a tract of land, was never refused permission to do so. All that was required of him, was to subscribe to the common conditions, namely, giving three-fourths of the revenue of the farm to the government. Even the remaining fourth was not wholly his own. It was taxed in various ways. The seed for the crop was supplied by the government but at usurious prices. The position of the tiller of the land was most distressing indeed.

To add to the troubles of the Kashmiris, the fierce Bombas and Khakhas, the warlike inhabitants of the Jhelum valley, often raided the country in consequence the weakening of the Sikh power. The governor was impotent to enforce the authority on these tribes due to his constant quarrels with the military commander. Moreover, the soldiery also was a disgruntled class, their pays remaining in arrears for years together. The Galawans, the notorious dacoits of Kashmir, who had been sternly dealt with by the Sikh governor, Mian Singh, again raised their head and proved a constant terror to the peace-loving Kashmiris.

Lt. Reynell G. Taylor who visited Srinagar in 1846 immediately after Gulab Singh's occupation of the Kashmir *gaddi* gives a graphic description of the miserable condition of the people. "The town presents a very miserable appearance. The houses made of wood and tumbling in every direction. The streets filthy for want of

drainage. None of the bazars looked well-filled and prosperous and altogether my ride made me unhappy."

Such was the state of things when Gulab Singh took over Kashmir. It is not difficult to imagine that he had a Herculian task to perform to clean the Aegean stables of administrative and economic ills from which the country was suffering. Though he showed signs of failing health, he set down with determination to the task of consolidating his kingdom on firm foundations.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, as it was officially designated now, differed from other Indian States in that it was totally independent in its internal affairs. Gulab Singh's first problem was to suppress crime ruthlessly and to maintain law and order with a stern hand. He believed in object lessons. He launched an extensive campaign against the Galawans, capturing their leaders and having them executed publicly after a summary trial. Their dead bodies were allowed to remain suspended from the gibbets for months together as a sign of terror to the lawbreakers. He drove the Khakhas and Bombas out of the Valley and installed strong garrisons in the forts guarding the passes. Order was restored in every part of the country and every effort was made to render trade and commerce safe for all.

"Gulab Singh brought the principle of personal rule to perfection", says Lawrence, "and showed the people that he could stand by himself. If he wanted their services he would have them without resorting to the old-fashioned device of paying for them by the alienation of State revenues. The State was Maharaja Gulab Singh and as he spent much of his time in Kashmir, and was an able and active ruler, and a fairly wise landlord, the condition of the people improved." But the great difficulty that the Maharaja experienced was with regard to *jagir* grants. There were no less than 3,115 *jagirs* granted in Dharmarth besides numerous alienations of other kinds. A large number of them were unregistered. The Maharaja is said to have remarked on his first visit to the Valley that he had actually got nothing in return for 75 lakhs of rupees, as two-thirds of the area was under hills and mountains and, therefore, unfit for cultivation and the remaining one-third belonged to the Jagirdars. With the help of some local aristocrats, headed by Rajakak Dhar he was able to ascertain the bonafides of the Jagirdars and resumed the lands of those who had been newly granted these in *jagirs*. This naturally created widespread resentment among the dispossessed landlords against Gulab Singh and his adviser Rajakak. But Gulab Singh did

not give in. Taylor, who conducted an independent inquiry, however, states that the Maharaja was inclined to be just and reasonable. Panikkar says:

> His point, was that people who began as revenue farmers should not claim the land they held in farm to be *Jagirs;* that grants when made should be strictly adhered to: that grantees who were given one acre should not be allowed to possess two on the same *sanad,* and that in cases of treason, rebellion, and gross misbehaviour the Jagirs should be liable to resumption.[13]

He reorganised the revenue and police administration of the Valley into four *wazarats* or districts. Experienced and trusted officials were placed in charge of key departments like the Audit and Accounts, the Dagshawl, Commissariat and police.

Begar or Forced Labour

The Maharaja in order to relieve the peasants of a grave injustice undertook the reform of the *begar* system. It would not be out of place here to mention the origin of this iniquitous custom which reduced the peasantry to a class of slaves. The Kashmir Valley, surrounded by high mountains and in the absence of any other transport, necessitated the employment of large numbers of men for carrying essential commodities into or out of the Valley. And during any large scale military venture huge armies of porters were requisitioned from the countryside. As Kashmir fell into the hands of unscrupulous conquerors and tyrants, payment to these porters was not made and the custom of forced labour or *begar* developed consequently. The earliest mention of *begar* is in the *Rajatarangini* (v — 172-74) when king Samkaravarman employed villagers to carry the baggage of, and supplies for his armies. There is a mention of *begar* also in the time of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin as well as during the rule of many succeeding Sultans. During the Mughal rule this developed into a regular institution, particularly when huge armies of porters were required to carry the baggage of the emperors and their retinue during their frequent visits to the Valley. Then followed the Afghan and the Sikh rule and these harsh masters were most unscrupulous in the employment of forced labour.

Maharaja Gulab Singh, therefore, tried to rationalise the system and to mitigate some of the hardships it entailed. "His idea was to

13. *Founding of the Kashmir State,* p. 136.

determine a certain number of men in each village who wanted to be considered liable to do labour when called upon by the government. For this they were to be paid one *Kharwar* of rice per month in pay and free rations when employed. Men not called upon to do *Begar* in the course of the year were only to be paid six *Kharwars* for that year. An officer was appointed to take charge of this work."[14] Most of the ills of this system, however, continued for some decades more and it was not till 1920 when public opinion against it developed in and outside Kashmir, that the *begar* system was abolished altogether.

Rationing of Rice

The most important reform instituted by Maharaja Gulab Singh was the rationing of rice to the city population. Due to its being cut off from the rest of India by high mountains as well as the tyrannous treatment of the cultivators by the government, Kashmir was experiencing shortage of foodgrains every now and then. The difficulties of the city population were doubly aggravated by the cornering of the grain by unscrupulous dealers. In order to meet this situation the Maharaja established a rigid monopoly of rice and had it sold at a fixed price to the citizens. This was all the more necessary because the majority of the people were artisans and shawl-weavers, who needed to be supplied cheap grains to be able to produce the valuable articles of export on which depended the economy of the Valley.

Reorganisation of Shawl Department

The reorganisation of the shawl department was a pressing problem and needed the immediate attention of the Maharaja. The history of this department, though interesting, is rather black. This department was called Dagshawl or Shawl Marking Department. How it came into existence has already been mentioned.

The Dagshawl in course of time also began to regulate the labour employed by every *karkhandar* or proprietor of a factory. The rich *karkhandars* made it a point to shift the incidence of taxation on to the shoulders of the weavers. During the Sikh period the *karkhandars* represented to the Darogah, Ram Dayal, that no sooner had a man learnt his work and probably some of the employer's trade secrets than he rose in value in the labour market and every effort was made by his employer's rivals to secure his service. The practice of enticing

14. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 136.

away an operative was, therefore, made penal. The shawl-weavers were thus in absolute charge of the *karkhandars*. They became their slaves and were forced to work very hard. Ram Dayal fixed 98 rupees as tax per loom and besides gave 20 *kharwars* of *shali* per loom at two rupees per *kharwar*, the market rate being only one rupee. This, together with the tax, amounted to 150 rupees per loom. The weaver might or might not work, but he had to pay. Not wonder 22 shawl-weavers are said to have cut off their thumbs in order to be disabled to pursue the profession of shawl-weaving and thus be saved from the tyrannies of their *karkhandars*.

In 1846 Sheikh Imam-ud-din, the last Sikh governor gave them a little relief by setting the shawl-weavers free from the bondage of *karkhandars* and remitting two annas per *kharwar* in the rate of *shali* advanced as *niliv*. This revived the industry and during Gulab Singh's rule there were 27,000 weavers working at 11,000 looms. But the wages paid to the workmen were miserably low. Moreover, in actual practice the *karkhandars* managed somehow to keep the workmen under perpetual bondage.

The shawl-weavers could bear the tyrannous system no longer. For once they combined and struck work on 6 June 1847, and asked for a permit to emigrate in body to the Punjab. The Maharaja was forced to act. He called their leaders to meet him and after inquiring into their grievances issued orders for their redress. Now the shawl-weaver had to pay only according to the actual work done by him on the loom and could change his employer at will. He was now no longer a serf.

British Interference

But Maharaja Gulab Singh was not left entirely at peace to carry out his polity of reform and reorganisation. Almost as soon as he acquired Kashmir he was subjected to strong pressure by the British Indian Government to allow them to have a say in the internal administration of his kingdom.

It has already been stated that the Amritsar treaty was considered by a large number of people in England as a gross blunder. Even though Gulab Singh showed by his most hospitable treatment of British visitors to the Valley that he was their staunchest friend, efforts were made to reduce his authority in the State by raising the question of his inefficient and harsh government of the Valley. In the spring of 1846, shortly after the treaty of Amritsar, Lord Hardinge visited the

Valley and on his return to Simla sent a note to the Maharaja stating that the nature of his internal administration aroused misgivings in the mind of the British Government and claiming the right on the part of the Company to interfere in his affairs. The object of this communication was to get a Resident appointed at Srinagar, for which no provision had been made in the treaty of 1846. A British official, Lieutenant Reynell Taylor, Assistant to the Resident at Lahore, was deputed to Srinagar to make personal inquiries and ascertain whether the Muslim population of Kashmir was satisfied with the rule of the Maharaja. Taylor reached Srinagar on 21 June 1846, and according to Hassan the historian, a big meeting of the people of Srinagar was called at the Maisuma Maidan which was addressed by Taylor who, at the end of his speech, asked them whether they were well governed and whether they would like the continuance of Gulab Singh's rule. Having been previously tutored by Rajakak Dhar, one and all replied in the affirmative and Lieutenant Taylor had to return as a disappointed man. He, however, sent a proposal on 12 July 1846 regarding the control of prices, grant of *rasad* (rations) in Srinagar, rules governing local and frontier *Jagirdars* and regulation of the shawl industry.

But the British were out for a showdown. On 9 June, 1847 colonel Henry Montgomery Lawrence and George Taylor wrote a letter to Gulab Singh complaining of (i) distress of Kashmiris on account of high prices of *shali* and high-handedness of the officials of the Durbar, (ii) occurrence of four cases of sati in the State, (iii) despatch of forces by the Maharaja to Gilgit, and (iv) Dharmarth realisations made by the Durbar from the Kashmiris. The Maharaja, however, welcomed all constructive criticism and frequently acted upon the friendly advice of his English friends like Henry John Lawrence, Captain Abbot, Captain Nicholson, John Hardinge and Edward Lake.

On 13 August 1847, Captain Cunningham and Mr Thomas were deputed for the determination of the boundary between the Punjab Government and the State. Captain Cunningham then proceeded to Ladakh on a similar mission and remained there for a number of years. During this period Cunningham made an exhaustive study of the topography, language and ethnology of Ladakh.

The real aim of the British pressure on the Maharaja was to make him agree to the posting of a Resident at his court and to give them the right to control his frontier policy. But with the outbreak of the second Sikh war in 1848 these pressure tactics were slackened for

some time.

The causes which led to this war and its outcome are well known to every student of modern Indian history. Chattar Singh who had made an alliance with Dost Mohammad, "sent an agent to the Maharaja at Srinagar, but Gulab Singh advised him against his schemes. Dost Mohammad also sent an agent but the Maharaja refused to receive him". The Maharaja on the other hand offered his help to the British and though looked down upon with suspicion at the beginning, the Maharaja was requested to close and guard the passes and to send an army to fight the Sikhs. At a later date Sir Lepel Griffin accused Gulab Singh of "complicity in the rebellion". But Sardar Panikkar refutes this allegation.

When the British finally pacified the Punjab they began to cast their longing eyes on Kashmir again. European visitors had begun to come to the Valley in ever larger numbers and this was used as a pretext for the necessity of the appointment of a Resident for looking after the interests of the European visitors. In 1851 the proposal was formally conveyed to the Maharaja, who again resisted, protesting that it was a direct violation of the treaty. He had, however, to finally agree to the posting of a special officer "at Srinagar to stay there till the return of visitors in order to put a stop to certain excesses committed by some of them".

Gulab Singh had to face trouble on his northern frontier almost as soon as he acquired Kashmir.

Rebellion in Gilgit and in Chilas

According to the Treaty of Amritsar only the hilly country between the Ravi and the Indus was transferred to Gulab Singh, but it was understood that he had been given a free hand to explore the possibilities of any extension of territory towards Gilgit, which had been already under the Sikh rule since 1841.

The Sikh State was induced to the acquisition of this strategic point by the internal feuds of the ruling family. Gaur Rahman, the eldest son of Mulk Imam, the ruler of Yasin, attacked and killed the Raja of Gilgit. This infuriated Karim Khan, the brother of the dead Raja, who appealed to Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din the Sikh governor of Kashmir for help. The Sikhs seized this opportunity of an extension of their power to Central Asia and sent a strong force under Nathu Shah of Gujranwala and Mathra Dass to the help of Karim Khan. A

long campaign ensued during which either side had to undergo great privations. Ultimately Nathu Shah successfully pacified the frontier and took in marriage the daughters of Gaur Rahman and of the Mirs of Hunza and Nagar. Overriding the claims of Karim Khan, who had asked for help, Nathu Shah occupied Gilgit permanently on behalf of the Sikhs.

The declining power of the Sikhs made the position of Nathu Shah very insecure and when Gulab Singh in 1846 acquired Kashmir, he transferred his services to him and was entrusted with the government of the frontier by his new master.

But the frontier chiefs, jealous of Gulab Singh's encroachments on their freedom, again rose in rebellion. Infuriated at the presence of two British officers at Gilgit, Agnew and Young of the Bengal Engineers, whom Nathu Shah had permitted to enter the area, the Mir of Hunza killed Nathu Shah and Karim Khan. Gaur Rahman finding the field clear, attacked Gilgit with the assistance of the people of Darel. Maharaja Gulab Singh sent troops from Kashmir which were reinforced by those stationed at Astore and Skardu and they defeated Gaur Rahman. Bhup Singh and Sant Singh the two officers of Gulab Singh remained in charge of the Gilgit area and conducted the administration peacefully for four years. In 1851, however, Bhup Singh with a force of 1,500 soldiers was lured into an ambuscade at the Niladar hill by the sons of Gaur Rahman named Mulk Aman, Mir Mali, Mir Ghazi and Pahalwan Bahadur who were assisted by the Hunza Raja and his followers. Eleven hundred of Bhup Singh's forces were killed and the rest taken as prisoner and later sold as slaves. Only one Gurkha woman by crossing the river reached Bunji to tell this sad tale. Sant Singh suffered a similar fate and thus all the territories to the right of the Indus were lost to Maharaja Gulab Singh.

Trouble also broke out in Chilas. In 1851 the Chilasi tribesmen carried out a marauding expedition into the Astore valley and carried away a large number of people as slaves. The Maharaja despatched a strong force in the spring of 1852 under the command of Diwan Hari Chand, Mian Hatu and Colonel Bijay Singh. The Dogra force had, however, to face stubborn resistance from the Chilasis who inflicted severe losses on them. Colonel Devi Singh's column was annihilated and Mangal Singh and Colonel Bijay Singh received severe wounds. The Dogras, however, laid siege to the fort of Chilas, but the country being barren the besieging army had to depend on rations sent

from Kashmir. These were speedily exhausted and the soldiers were forced to eat "the leaves of trees and barks of plants." The Dogras, however, fought on vigorously. Finally their winter supply being exhausted, the Chilasis sued for peace. Their leaders were brought to Srinagar, where they accepted the Maharaja's authority and left back their sons as hostages.

Maharaja Gulab Singh had to face one more organised attempt at the disruption of the State. The British who were bent on creating troubles for Gulab Singh in order to weaken him, now resorted to their favourite strategy of creating schism in the ruling family. Towards the end of his life, one of his nephews Jawahar Singh, the second son of his brother Dhyan Singh was encouraged to a rebellion in his *jagir* at Jasrota and to appeal to the British at Lahore for the restitution of one half of the State to him. The Maharaja took vigorous measures against the rebel and despatched a large force under Colonel Hari Chand and Colonel Bijay Singh and the strongholds were reduced. Meanwhile he sent Diwan Jwala Sahai to Lahore to plead his case. The British who were inclined to concede Jawahar's claim later on came to know that he was in correspondence with Afghanistan. Jawahar's estate was confiscated and he was interned at Ambala where he died.

Gulab Singh's Achievements

Further British intrigues against Gulab Singh were, however, arrested due to the outbreak of the Mutiny. A wise and far-sighted politician as he was, Gulab Singh realised early that his position as the ruler of the most important frontier State of India could only be maintained with the British help and if their authority got weakened he would be the first to suffer. He, therefore, advised Ranbir Singh whom he had installed as a full-fledged ruler in February 1856, himself leading a secluded life in Kashmir, to send all possible help to the British in this hour of their supreme need. Accordingly he ordered Diwan Jwala Sahai to proceed to Rawalpindi and offer all resources of the State to the British government in his name. The offer of military and financial help was accepted, and Maharaja Ranbir Singh together with Diwan Hari Chand was ordered to go with a large force to help in the siege of Delhi. The Kashmir forces proved of help to the British and suffered great losses. Maharaja Ranbir Singh had to return early due to the death of Gulab Singh in August 1857, but Diwan Hari Chand was killed in action outside Delhi.

That Gulab Singh was a shrewd opportunist nobody can deny. Having risen from the lowest rung of the ladder to a conspicuous height is, however, no mean achievement. In a court bristling with intrigues and rivalries, Gulab Singh found a fertile field to bring into play his intelligence and shrewdness.

This, however, does not cover his faults; and "where his interest required he did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems which would in ordinary life be considered dishonourable", is admitted even, by his biographer, Sardar Panikkar.

Gulab Singh's greed for money has earned him a low reputation. As Drew observes:

> With the customary offering of a rupee as *nazar*, any-one could get Gulab Singh's ear. Even in a crowd, one could catch his eye by holding up a rupee and crying out *'Maharaj arz hai'*, that is, 'Maharaja, a petition'. He would pounce down like a hawk on the money, and having appropriated it, would patiently hear out the petition. Once a man, after this fashion of making a complaint when the Maharaja was about to take the rupee, closed his hand and said, 'No; first hear what I have to say.' Even this did not go beyond Gulab Singh's patience. He waited till the fellow had told his tale and opened his hand. Then taking the money, he gave orders about the case.

There is a psychological background to this greed for money in Gulab Singh. He naively believed that as he had purchased Kashmir in consideration of lakhs of rupees, he had to amass this capital as well as its profit in as short a time as possible. But he was a wise landlord and proceeded in a methodic manner. The people got a spell of peace and order after decades of chaos and lawlessness, and naturally their condition improved, despite the severe taxations of Gulab Singh. He meted out justice expeditiously and was frequently touring the State punishing corrupt and tyrannical officials. But his preoccupations with frontier wars and the British intrigues to raise trouble in the State, did not give him enough time to properly organise a stable and ordered governmental machinery. That fell to the lot of his son, Ranbir Singh.

Maharaja Gulab Singh is the only Indian ruler to have carved out a State for himself during the 19th century out of the wreckage of the great kingdom of the Sikhs. Moreover, he is the only Indian ruler to have extended the frontiers of India to their natural boundary.

His conquest of Ladakh is a landmark in the development of India as it is today.

Gulab Singh was a devout Hindu. He prohibited the killing of cows in the State and laid the foundations of a religious trust called Dharmarth. He built numerous temples in Jammu and Srinagar and was also the founder of a new town, Purmandal, near Jammu. Apart from this there are no great architectural buildings to his credit. Panikkar opines:

> On the whole, Gulab Singh led a pure life. The court of Ranjit Singh was dissolute in the extreme and the Sikh ruler did not hesitate to exhibit himself in public in a drunken state. The morals of the Lahore Durbar were such as to shock even a corrupt age. But Gulab Singh was not given to these excesses. For the age and the circumstances of his time he led a life which could in no sense be considered dissolute.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh

Maharaja Gulab Singh's death was not followed by any major disturbance in the administrative set-up or composition of his newly-founded State, as generally happened on such occasions during those uncertain days with princely states carved out by enterprising adventurers or military commanders. No doubt, the stability of the State was mainly due to its being under the protection of the British who had been instrumental in its foundation. An additional factor was the wise decision of the late Maharaja to formally install, when his health began to fail, his only surviving son, Ranbir Singh, on the *gaddi* in February 1856, and himself accept the governorship of the Valley. the *Rajtilak* ceremony was attended by several princes and nobles of the Punjab and the British put their seal of approval on his accession to the *gaddi* in the lifetime of his father, by presenting costly gifts to the new Maharaja.

Born in 1829 AD, Ranbir Singh passed his youth in the company of his father and took part in several of his campaigns in and around his State. This, together with the thorough training given to him by his father in manly arts, made Ranbir Singh a proficient soldier and an efficient commander. He did not devote much time to acquiring literary education, but what he lacked in this was amply compensated by his sharp memory, quick grasp of facts, sterling moral character and polished manners.

He was married at the young age of 14 to a daughter of Raja Bijay Singh of Seeba. The marriage celebrated in great pomp was attended by his two uncles and their large retinues. At that time they were at the height of their power, being virtually the king-makers of the Punjab.

Three years later, his father added Kashmir Valley to his growing State and became the ruler of a large and important frontier region of India. Gulab Singh was naturally called upon to consolidate his newly acquired territories, and Ranbir Singh assisted him by taking over the administration of the Jammu Province. And thus at 28 years of age when his father died, he was sufficiently experienced to take upon himself the arduous duties of the ruler of the largest princely State of India.

Administrative Reforms

During his reign there was a steady improvement in the economic condition of the people, but it was very slow. The Maharaja himself was extremely popular with his people, but unfortunately he had no such officials capable of doing hard work required to remove the terrible effects of many centuries of misgovernment, "and especially of the harsh,cruel rules of the Afghans and Sikhs". The officials were accustomed to the old style of rule and knew no better. They believed not in helping the people to produce wealth by sympathetic treatment, but in extracting the last farthing out of them to fill the coffers of the Maharaja and their own pockets.

The land tenure of the Valley was in a hopeless mess and the collection of land revenue was primitive and conducive to killing all incentive among agriculturists to till the land. Maharaja Ranbir Singh's first concern was to effect improvements in this and he attempted to change the old system and assess land revenue at a fixed amount. But no sooner was the reform introduced than the officials turned this very measure into a means of peculation. There was widespread distress in the land. The Maharaja, when he came to know of it, immediately toured the Valley to assure the cultivators of his sympathy towards them. While camping at Achhabal he personally attended to the complaints of the peasantry wronged by the officials who were compelled to return all the money they had squeezed out of the impoverished people. But no sooner was the Maharaja's camp struck than the officials indulged in their usual game of robbing and harassing the cultivators.

Ranbir Singh also attempted to introduce a number of reforms in the administration of the State. He set up three main departments — the revenue, the civil and the military — with clearly-defined spheres of work. New subdivisions were created for both civil and revenue administration. The judicial system was reorganised and a penal code was drawn up on the lines of Macaulay's code in British India. Appeal courts were set up both at Jammu and Srinagar and nearly 30 subordinate courts functioned in the State. Justice was inexpensive and it required only half a rupee worth of stamp to have a case heard by the Maharaja himself. He would "examine and sharply cross-examine the witnesses" and often refer the matter to a magistrate for investigation. Crime of all kinds was, however, rare chiefly because of the remembrance of the terrible punishments of Gulab Singh's time and because of the system of fixing responsibility for undetected crime upon local officials.

The Maharaja took steps to promote trade and commerce. He, moreover, realised the importance of good communications both inside the State and with the rest of the country. A few pathways and roads were constructed. Half a lakh of rupees was spent on repairing the paths, and the construction of the cart road between Rawalpindi and Srinagar was begun towards the end of his rule. Similarly, a path between Jammu and the Valley was built. A telegraph and postal service was instituted.

In agriculture a number of new staples were introduced. Money was freely spent on vines, wine-making and hops. So was the case with the development of silk industry. SIlkworm seeds, imported from China, were distributed among villagers. Experimental tea gardens were laid out and iron and coal worked in some localities in Jammu.

Decline of the Shawl Industry

The shawl industry received his special attention. There were 27,000 weavers working on 11,000 looms. The head of the Shawl Department, Pandit Rajakak Dhar was supposed to recover and pay to the State 12 lakhs of rupees. The weavers had thus to pay 49 rupees each and they were again kept under the charge of *karkhandars* or manufacturers and none could leave the one for another master. The result was that after working from morning to night a shawl-weaver could get no more than four pice in wage per day. A weaver could thus earn seven or eight rupees per month out of

which he paid five rupees in tax which left him with three rupees to live on. A lazy and sickly weaver could earn only two or three rupees per month and could not pay the tax and thus became a debtor to the government.

This intolerable condition of the weavers forced them to unite and proceed in a body to the residence of the governor where they intended to present him with a petition for the redress of their grievances. Rajakak Dhar, however, misrepresented this move and convinced the governor that the processionists would attack his house and kill him. This roused his fury and he quickly brought out a company of soldiers to disperse them. In the stampede that followed a number of shawl-weavers jumped into the river, 28 of them getting drowned.

However, the Maharaja, in 1868 AD, remitted 11 rupees from the tax of 49 rupees, and three years later when the shawl trade was on the decline due to fall in demand of shawls following the Franco-German War, reduced the price of paddy that the shawl-weavers had to purchase from State granaries. But no amount of remedial measures could revive the industry which the taxation policy of the rulers, the Franco-German War and the famine of 1878-79 killed outright. The Maharaja realising that it was a dead industry abolished the tax altogether, retaining only a nominal duty on the export of shawls. This too was remitted in 1886 by his successor, Maharaja Pratap Singh.

Patronage of Art and Letters

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a patron of learning and art. His court attracted learned men from all over India. He gave a donation of one lakh of rupees when the idea of establishing the Punjab University at Lahore was first mooted, and when the University came into existence, he became its first Fellow. He also donated liberally to Sanskrit institutions at Banaras and made provisions from the State for students who studied there. He established several schools, *maktabs* and *pathshalas* in Jammu and Srinagar and some of the towns in the State. He took a personal interest in the progress of education. George Buhler who visited the Valley in 1875 in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, writes in his *Report* :

He (Maharaja Ranbir Singh) was good enough to take me to his *Muddrissa* (School) and to allow me to examine some of the pupils in his presence. The active manner in which he took part in the examination showed that he was well acquainted with the subjects taught and that he took a real interest in the work of education. This *Muddrissa* which is the chief educational institution in Kashmir, contains besides a Sanskrit College where poetry, poetics, grammar and philosophy are studied, Persian classes and school of Industry. Mathematics are also taught, according to a Dogra translation of the *Lilavati*. I examined several classes in Sanskrit, Euclid and Algebra, and most of the boys did very fairly.

A splendid monument to his zeal for religion and letters is the Raghunath Temple at Jammu. Constructed shortly after his accession, the temple became a centre of learning and research. Here were established a Sanskrit College, a magnificent library and a translation bureau. A large number of Sanskrit and Persian books, printed and in manuscript, were translated into Dogri, Hindi and Urdu. Most of the Sanskrit texts written in the Sarada script of Kashmir were transcribed into Devanagri. The library contained over 5,000 manuscript volumes. Some of them were also printed in the Vidya Vilas Press, the first in the State, which the Maharaja established. In a reference to Ranbir Singh's educational policy, the celebrated research scholar and antiquarian, Sir Aurel Stein observes:

> Translation into Hindi of standard works, selected from the whole range of *Dharshanas*, the *Dharma*, and other *Shastras*, were executed and partly printed, with the object of spreading a knowledge of classical Hindu learning among the Maharaja's Dogra subjects. Again Persian and Arabic works on historical, philosophical and other subjects were translated into Sanskrit with the assistance of competent *Moulvis* in order to facilitate that exchange of ideas which the Maharaja in a spirit to true enlightenment desired to promote between the representatives of Hindu and Mohammadan scholarship in his dominions.

The Famine of 1878-79

But his efforts towards ameliorating the economic condition of the people and promoting intellectual and literary activities among them, were nullified by the doings of his officials and servants, who, living still in an old time economy, did not cooperate in carrying out his modernistic reforms. The standard of living among the people was

very low, the means of communication were rough and rude. There was still much wasteland which the people were unwilling to put under cultivation, because under the existing system of land revenue administration they could not be sure that they would ever receive the fruits of their labour. "Upon every branch of commerce there was a multiplicity and weight of exactions. No product was too insignificant and no person too poor to contribute to the State."[15]

No wonder in 1877, when — through excess of rain which destroyed the crops — famine came to the land, neither were the people prepared to meet the emergency, nor were the officials capable of mitigating its effects, and direful calamity was the consequence.

Continuous rains which fell from October 1877 till January 1878, destroyed the autumn crops, waiting to be harvested or lying in the fields. Normally these should have been stored safely long before October, but the old system which delayed reaping operations for revenue collection, was directly responsible for the catastrophe. The rice and the maize which were then hurriedly cut were stacked wet. Combustion set in and the grain became black and rotten. When it was evident that there would be no rice or maize for food, the officials became nervous and ordered to sell at cheap rates the grain collected in revenue and stored by the government, without husbanding a portion for seed purposes. As the winter drew on, the plough-cattle died for want of food. Middlemen and corrupt officials did the rest, the latter resorting to house searches in the villages for grain which created panic and resulted in its complete disappearance from the Valley. For rather than make over their scanty stocks to greedy and unprincipled officials the villagers hid their grain in the damp earth or sunk it in the river.

The one hope at the beginning of 1878 was on the spring crops of barley and wheat, but heavy rain injured the harvest, and of the poor remnant very little was allowed to go to the cultivators. The same rain damaged the fruit crop and when the hungry people had devoured the blossoms of the apples and pears, and the unripe fruit of the mulberries, they turned to grasses and roots of the swamps and forests. Those near the forests lived on herbs till the skim milk lasted, but herbs without milk soon proved fatal, and by the summer of 1878 famine was raging and corpses lay strewn about, unburied, and prowling dogs began to prey on these. The famine took an enormous

15. Younghusband, *Kashmir*, p. 260.

toll of human life and it has been calculated that three-fifths of the total population of the Valley perished.

> Many attempted to escape to the Punjab, but at the barriers troops were stationed to prevent the migration of the people. At the end of 1878, however, the old system of *Rahdari* under which no man could leave the Valley without permission was given up, and some of the weak survivors tottered over the passes to the Punjab, many dying in the way.[16]

The Maharaja, however, spared no money in procuring grain from the Punjab which was brought with great difficulty over the long, bad roads. But unfortunately the officials turned the Maharaja's attempt to save the lives of his subjects into a source of profit. Until October 1879 all the horrors of famine prevailed, when the crop proved to be a bumper one.

The effects of the famine lasted long, and for years after, the Valley did not recover from this awful visitation. "When I commenced the work of inspecting villages in 1889,"remarks Lawrence, "there was hardly a village where I did not see deserted houses and abandoned fields, the owners of which had perished in the great famine of 1878."[17]

When the story of the deadly famine filtered through to the Punjab there was an outburst of anger at the mismanagement of affairs in the State, and the British Government getting a handle to condemn the Maharaja's administration tried to plant their own officers in the Valley and on its frontiers. The gravest charges of neglect and dreadful cruelty were brought against the Maharaja. He was accused of having drowned people by boatloads in the Wular during the famine so as to be saved of the expense of feeding them. But he heroically challenged the base calumny and when an enquiry was instituted he was exonerated.

British Interest in Central Asia

In spite of the regard and respect shown by the Maharaja to British officials, diplomatic relations were not always friendly and at one time his active interest in the affairs of Central Asia, created a doubt in Calcutta about his loyalty to the British Government. In 1873, they revived the proposal to appoint a Resident which

16. Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 215.
17. Ibid, p. 216.

Maharaja Gulab Singh had stoutly refused to accept, when it had been put forth by Lord Hardinge in 1848 almost immediately after handing over the Valley to him. In a well-reasoned communication Maharaja Ranbir Singh pointed out that there was no provision in the treaty which gave authority to the British Government to appoint a Resident. But with the increasing apprehensions of the extending Tsarit Empire towards India, British activities on the trans-Himalayan areas increased day by day. At the same time, however, they did not consider it advisable and politic to altogether eliminate the sympathies of the Maharaja's government by riding roughshod over his wishes, and, therefore, they withdrew for the time being their claim to the planting of a Resident at the Kashmir Court.

Ranbir Singh, however, was not a passive spectator of the moves and countermoves that were taking place on his frontiers. He too sent his trusted officials and agents to explore the vast regions of Central Asia and Persia. Mehta Sher Singh an officer of great dash and pluck, travelled deep in Central Asia in 1866-67, and on his return submitted an interesting and illuminating diary of his travels. The same year another State officer, Mohammad Khan Kishtwari, also travelled extensively in these regions and submitted a report of his tour. Kadir Joo and Mian Salab Singh went to Yarkand in 1864 on a political mission on behalf of the Maharaja. A military officer named Soba Khan Bandooki went to study the military disposition of the Chinese in Central Asia and submitted a comprehensive report of his findings to the Maharaja's Government.[18] After studying all these reports of his spies, in and of political mission to, Central Asia, the Maharaja was emboldened to take advantage of the disturbed state of political conditions in these regions and asked permission of the British Government to despatch a military expedition to Yarkand and Kashgar and attempt to incorporate these two cities and the territories adjacent to them into his own dominions.

> However in 1865, the Jammoo Government despatched a small body of troops across the Karakoram, with orders to occupy the country as far as Shahdula or Shadula, and to build and garrison a fort there, which was done. Shahdula is about three days' journey beyond the Karakoram pass. The fort was provisioned and occupied by Jamoo troops during the summers of 1865 and 1866, the force being withdrawn in the winter on account of the severity of the climate.

18. Kashmir Government Records, File Nos. 296, 332, 379, 536.

But the British who had already begun to cast doubts on the loyalty of Ranbir Singh did not countenance these activities of his and sent him a strong note of disapproval. They had formulated their own plans for a long-term policy of commercial penetration to, and subsequent political domination of Central Asia.

During the 20 years following the Crimean War, Russia traversed 600 miles eastwards. Chimkent was occupied in 1864, Tashkent in 1865, Khojand in 1866, Yani Kurgan in 1867. The Khanate of Bokhara was brought within the Russian sphere of influence, Samarqand was occupied in 1868 and Russians entered Khiva in 1873. Galvanised to frantic activity by these developments, the British began their counter-moves. The part played by them in fomenting trouble in Chinese Turkistan towards the end of the 19th century is a matter of common history. It was in 1870 that Ranbir Singh was persuaded to appoint Mr Drew and later in 1871 Mr Johnson as his commissioners for the district of Ladakh. It was significantly during these years that the revolt of Yaqub Beg took place resulting in the establishment of his short-lived independent State of Kashgaria and Yarkand.

The Forsythe Mission to Yarkand

So high was the political stock of the Kashmir Government in Central Asia during this period that most of the communications addressed to the British passed through the Kashmir Durbar;[19] and it was to the Maharaja's Court that the first envoy of Yaqub Beg came in 1872 with presents from his master. The Maharaja, however, directed him to see the Viceroy and as a result of this the famous mission of Douglas Forsythe was despatched to Central Asia which paved the way for later British Indian commerce with these regions.[20]

By giving an impression that it was a joint mission of the British and Kashmiri officials that would be sent to Yaqub Beg, the Maharaja was induced to give all assistance in the way of supplying provisions, carriage and active cooperation to the Forsythe Mission. There were: "altogether 1621 horses and yaks employed and 6476 coolies of whom 1236 were dooly bearers. These men and cattle were distributed over the different stages and kept for about two months on this duty until the arrival and passage from Murree of Haji Tora and his suite.[21]

19. See Owen Lattimore, *The Pivot of Asia.*
20. Kashmir Government Records :File Nos. 486B & 757A-B.
21. H.W. Bellew, *Kashmir & Kashghar, A Narrative of the Journey of the Embassy to Kashghar in 1873.*

On the successful return of the Mission, the Maharaja was further pressed to enter into a 'commercial' treaty with the British Government in 1873, according to which a British Joint Commissioner was appointed at Leh to look after the upkeep of the road and the safety of travellers to Central Asia.[22] The Maharaja could not there after levy any toll or duty on goods sent from British India or abroad to Central Asia and *vice versa.* The Maharaja had to pay a sum of 5,000 rupees in the first instance for carrying out repairs to, and there after to make annual contributions for the upkeep of the road and the various *serais* or rest-houses for travellers. British Indian or Central Asian nationals could start provision and carriage-supplying business at any stage on the road without let or hindrance on the part of the Maharaja. Elaborate rules were framed for the maintenance of law and order and dispensing of justice in these areas. The British were empowered to carry out survey operations and the Maharaja was entitled to depute his officials to work with the British parties.[23] In short, the whole conduct of relations both political and commercial with the Central Asian, Chinese and Tibetan Governments was taken over by the British. And although the Kashmir envoy made his usual triennial trips to Lhasa till as late as 1882, the Maharaja's influence and prestige in these regions were completely destroyed.

The Maharaja was also pressed by the British to grant a *jagir* in Kashmir to Haji Yaqub Tora, the envoy of Yaqub Beg, and to this effect a *sanad* dated Samvat 25th Magh, 1931, corresponding to 8 February 1877, was granted to Yaqub Beg by the Maharaja.[24]

In recognition of all these friendly services rendered to the British Government and to the Forsythe Mission, Her Majesty Queen Victoria was graciously pleased to present to Maharaja Ranbir Singh with a small steam-launch of the type usually carried by the ships of the Royal Navy ! Since this was the first boat of its kind to be brought into Kashmir, it evoked a great deal of enthusiasm and curiosity among the people so much so that nearly the whole population of Srinagar came out to witness its passage down the Jhelum.[25]

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22. Ibid.
23. Bates, *Gazetteer.*
24. Kashmir Govt. Records, file No. 486, B.
25. The boat has now been placed on view in the garden of the Legislative Assembly. For a detailed account of its first trials in the Dal lake, see Wakefield, *The Happy Valley,* p.166-67.

With the appointment of the British Joint Commissioner in Ladakh and a political officer in Gilgit was ushered in a period of total British domination of all the foreign relations of Kashmir with the Governments of Central Asia and Tibet. A British trade officer was appointed in Kashghar who curiously enough was designated as "Special Assistant to the Kashmir Resident for Chinese Affairs".[26]

Gilgit and Chitral

With regard to Gilgit, Chitral and adjacent principalities, Maharaja Ranbir Singh's expansionist policy was similarly interfered with by the British Government. Immediately after the acquisition of Gilgit by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1846, a widespread trouble broke out there chiefly due to the presence of two British officers deputed by the Maharaja. While Gulab Singh was busy in consolidating his position in the Kashmir Valley, the unruly tribesmen of Gilgit and the adjacent areas rose against his authority and though the State troops at Gilgit made various attempts to bring these frontier chiefs under the subjection of the Maharaja, they, in many cases, met with disaster. But soon after Maharaja Ranbir Singh's accession to the throne, the Raja of Nagar started to pay tribute to the State and received a subsidy as a feudatory therefrom.

After the death of Gaur Rahman in 1856, the chief who had rebelled against Gulab Singh, Maharaja Ranbir Singh deputed General Devi Singh with a large force to reconquer Gilgit. The enemy fled before him and Devi Singh occupied the district as far as Yasin. He then returned, keeping some loyal local chiefs as governors of Yasin and Punial.

In 1859, there was again a revolt in Gilgit against the rule of the Dogras. Maharaja Ranbir Singh despatched a punitive force under the command of General Hushiara to punish the insurgents. The rebels were defeated and their leader Mulk Aman fled to Chitral. Gilgit was permanently annexed to Jammu and Kashmir.

In 1870 agreements and treaties were entered into with the chiefs of Hunza and Nagar, apparently after they had been quelled by the Maharaja's forces. The Chief of Nagar gave a guarantee of safety for trade and commerce between Gilgit and Nagar and kept hostages at Gilgit as a guarantee for good conduct and for regular payment of tribute. The Raja of Hunza gave a similar undertaking and was granted

26. Mr George Macartney was the first official appointed to this post.

a subsidy of 2,000 rupees a year. He agreed to make over the revenue of Chaprot to the Maharaja, apparently in lieu of the transfer of the fort itself.

Meanwhile events on the north-west frontier of India were moving fast. The Afghan War was in the offing and the British were anxious to isolate Afghanistan and eliminate any possible threat from Chitral. This area was also attracting the attention of Tsarist military experts. The Russian Government made no secret of their desire to hoist the Tsar's flag on the frontiers of Kashmir. The Afghan government too were exerting pressure on the Mehtar, threatening him with invasion. The British were, however, so situated that they were helpless to render him any assistance directly to meet this threat. They, therefore, encouraged Maharaja Ranbir Singh to take over the obligation and to accept the position of suzerain over Chitral and to hold out the assurance of assistance to the Mehtar. Negotiations were opened between the officers of the Maharaja and the Mehtar, which eventually resulted in a treaty between Aman-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar, and the Maharaja. According to the treaty, the Mehtar accepted the suzerainty of the Maharaja, and in token thereof agreed to pay annually a small tribute. The Maharaja on his part had to pay him an annual subsidy of 12,000 rupees.

But things were not to remain quiet in this region of perpetual intrigue and political turmoil. Soon the Mehtar failing to carry out some of his engagements to the Maharaja was involved in a military conflict with the State forces as well as of some smaller principalities tributary to the Maharaja. The net result was that some of his territories were detached from his rule and handed over to more loyal chiefs. Koh, Ghizer and Ishkoman came directly under the Maharaja's rule after these districts were severed from Chitral.

Not being happy with the influence created by the Maharaja on the frontier, and in order to be informed of the latest moves of Russia across the Pamirs, the British in 1887 deputed captain Biddulph as Officer on Special Duty at Gilgit. The Agency remained in Gilgit for four years — until 1891; when it was withdrawn, the necessity for its continuance being then past with the installation by the British of a new ruler in Afghanistan.

The End of an Era

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign witnessed the successful con-

clusion of the Trigonometrical Survey of the State and the preparation of its map in 1861. The Trigonometrical Survey of India commenced its operations in the State during Maharaja Gulab Singh's when rule Lieutenant Colonel (afterwards General) Waugh was the Surveyor-General of India. The survey in the Valley and the frontier was supervised by Major Montgomerie and after his death by Mr J. Peyton.

An event of far-reaching consequence was the establishment in 1881 of a Church Missionary School by Rev. Doxey, who was succeeded by Rev. J. H. Knowles. This ushered in an era of modernism in education which made the Kashmiris realise their own abject condition and later to fight for their destiny. The foundation of a hospital by the Medical Mission of the same Society also brought much-needed relief to the suffering masses in the State. Both the Educational and Medical Missions set up noble traditions in selfless service to the people, and those of the Kashmiris who joined these institutions as teachers or doctors have maintained these traditions ever since.

Though devoted to his religion, Maharaja Ranbir Singh was kind and tolerant to the Muslims to whom he allowed the free exercise of their religion. In 1872 there was an outbreak between the Sunnis and Shias, apparently on sectarian basis, but in reality on economic grounds. There was a severe depression in the shawl industry following the Franco-German War of 1870 when the French market was lost, and the shawl weavers who were mostly Sunnis were hit very hard. Their discontent took a violent turn and they attacked and looted the rich manufacturers and traders who belonged mostly to the Shia sect. The Shia localities were gutted and looted by the impoverished Sunnis. The Maharaja soon quelled the disturbances and gave three lakhs of rupees in compensation to the Shias.

In his private life the Maharaja was "certainly free from the many frivolities and vices which but too often disfigure the private conduct of oriental Princes".[27] And Mr Drew has given a pleasant picture of how the Maharaja in the old fashioned way "so liked by the people and so conducive of good relations between rulers and subjects, used to sit daily in public Darbar in full view of his people, receiving and answering his people's petitions".[28]

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27. *Diaries*, Vol. II, pp. 142-43.
28. Younghusband, *Kashmir*, pp. 156-157.

The ghastly famine of 1878-79 darkened the latter part of his reign, as also did the disease from which he never recovered. On 15 September 1885, he breathed his last at Jammu and was succeeded by his eldest son, Maharaja Pratap Singh.

19

DAWN OF MODERNISM

Maharaja Pratap Singh's accession to the *gaddi* is a landmark in the history of modern Kashmir. During his long reign of 40 years several progressive reforms were carried through. The land revenue was properly assessed and fixed in cash for a definite number of years and the share claimed by the State was greatly reduced. A first-rate cart-road down the Jhelum valley and another over the Banihal pass were built, linking the Valley with the rest of India. Heavy taxes on trade were reduced. A scheme for drainage of the Valley, reclaiming wasteland and preventing floods was put into operation. Srinagar, Jammu and a few more towns were electrified. The administrative machinery was completely overhauled and a humble beginning was made in giving representation to the people in the two municipalities of Srinagar and Jammu.

Maharaja Pratap Singh

All this was achieved with the help and prompting of the British Resident who was appointed immediately on the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. From that date the conduct of the internal administration of the State, and the watch and ward of its northern and eastern frontiers became directly the concern of the British Indian Government. How they succeeded in gaining this dominating position is a sad but interesting story of political intrigue and base diplomacy.

British Control Over the State

Two factors were directly responsible for this development — the new Maharaja's unimpressive figure and indifferent health, and the legacy of the vigorous forward policy of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty. At a time when Afghanistan and its northern frontiers were being

subjected to the onslaughts of the rising wave of Tsarist Russia, the British in India were in no mood to respect the treaty obligations with a princely State which they considered to be their own creation.

Born at Riasi in 1850 AD, Pratap Singh received education in Dogri, Sanskrit, Persian and English. In his youth he was entrusted by his father with the duties of hearing petitions from people and passing suitable orders in consultation with some of his experienced officials. In this way he got acquainted with the working of various departments of administration. When Lord Ripon visited Kashmir in 1881, Pratap Singh was deputed to receive him at the border and to look after his comforts. In all these assignments Pratap Singh showed his capacity for hard work and intelligent planning. But his unimpressive physique — lean and short — and his submissive nature weighed heavily against him, and there were misgivings about Pratap Singh's ability to govern efficiently.

The fateful year 1885 which coincided with Maharaja Pratap Singh's accession to the *gaddi* was surcharged with tension on the north western frontiers of India. Lord Dufferin on his assumption of the Viceroyalty of India was faced with the problem of the demarcation of the northern boundary of Afghanistan with Tsarist Russia. During the negotiations over the disputed boundary line, occurred the famous 'Panjdeh Incident' which brought Russia and Great Britain to the brink of 'war in all parts of the world'. Indeed when the news came that the Russian General Komaroff had attacked and driven out the Afghan garrison of Panjdeh, hardly any responsible person in England at the time thought that the danger could be averted. "Popular opinion was greatly inflamed against Russia, there was something approaching a panic on the stock exchange, the Conservative opposition were clamorous for strong action, and Gladstone, the Liberal Prime Minister, speaking of the situation as one of extreme gravity, asked for and readily obtained a vote of credit for eleven millions."[1]

Though the 'Panjdeh Incident' ended peacefully, it convinced the British of the importance of strengthening their control on the frontier regions, and thus Kashmir came in for their special attention. We have already noted that both Maharaja Gulab Singh and Maharaja Ranbir Singh opposed vigorously the appointment of a British Resident at their court. There was, however, placed a seasonal Officer

1. P.E.Roberts, *History of British India*, p. 474.

on Special Duty in Srinagar ostensibly to look after the interests of European visitors to Kashmir, but in reality to keep a watch on the doings of the Maharaja and his officials. When death removed the late Maharaja from the scene, the Government of India took the first opportunity to establish a British Residency in Srinagar, for which they had already made definite plans. In a letter dated 7 April 1884, to the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India stated that the establishment of a Residency in Kashmir was "a measure which may be called for, not merely by the need for assisting and supervising administrative reforms, but also by the increasing importance to the Government of India of watching events beyond the North Western frontiers of Kashmir."

On 14 September 1885, shortly after the new Maharaja's accession to the throne, the Viceroy sent a despatch emphasising that it was essential in the interests of good government that the Maharaja introduced certain reforms in his administration and accepted a British Resident in Srinagar. The Maharaja, jealous of encroachment on his powers, wrote in protest: "I do not hesitate to admit that the existing state of affairs in Cashmere urgently requires the introduction of substantial reforms in the administration of the country, but I beg to assure you that nothing shall be spared on my part to prove beyond any possibility of doubt that it is my ambition to make my country a well-governed State in alliance with the Government of India." But the new Maharaja's vigorous protests were of no avail, for the appointment of a Resident on Ranbir Singh's death had been decided upon much earlier. In his report to the Secretary of State in 1884, Lord Ripon had made a definite assertion of this decision. "The British", he wrote, "did not take the action earlier conceiving that a favourable opportunity would present itself on the occurrence of a fresh succession — an event which seemed unlikely to be long postponed. When that event takes place we consider that it will be our duty to impress upon the Cashmere Government its obligations to its own subjects, and to see that the reforms which are so urgently needed are no longer postponed."

Sir Olivier St. John, the first Resident, was succeeded in March 1888 by C. Plowden. The latter an intriguing and vigorous officer of the Political Department at once set about planning the deposition of the Maharaja and the outright annexation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Deposition of the Maharaja

Plowden in his note to the Viceroy reported that the Maharaja was imbecile and lacked intelligence, and that he would thwart all attempts to improve the administration. He, with the help of the Maharaja's younger brother, prepared some letters, purporting to have been written by Pratap Singh to his trusted servants to kill the Resident by poison, and revealing treasonable correspondence with Tsarist Russia. Suddenly the Anglo-Indian press in India came out with the sensational news that the Maharaja of Kashmir was found guilty of treasonable activities. The Indian owned press, particularly the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta took up the Maharaja's cause. The *Patrika* secured and published a secret note written by the then Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, showing the British anxiety to take the frontier districts of the State under their direct supervision and for that purpose to control the internal affairs of the State. At once there arose a storm in India at this wanton disregard of treaty obligations and, therefore, the idea of deposing the Maharaja was given up. "If we annex Gilgit," wrote Durand to Lord Dufferin, "or put an end to the suzerainty of Kashmir or the petty principalities of the neighbourhood, and, above all, if we put British troops into Kashmir just now, we shall run a risk of turning the Darbar against us and thereby increase the difficulty of the position."

The idea of outright annexation of Kashmir and the deposition of the Maharaja was given up.

Instead, the Resident presented Pratap Singh in March 1889, with the draft of an *Irshad* or Edict-of-Resignation announcing his own abdication in favour of a Council of Regency, with Raja Amar Singh, his younger brother, as its President. The Maharaja, with great composure of mind, declared that "if his own brothers were determined to ruin him with false accusations, he would submit to his fate. His Highness did not take his meals for two days, he was so much over-powered; and in his frenzy he saw no room for escape, except to give his consent to such arrangements as were proposed to him."[2]

According to this *Irshad*, he was relieved of the effective ruler-ship of the State, which was placed, subject to the control of the Resident, in the hands of the Council of Regency consisting of Raja Amar Singh, Raja Ram Singh, an experienced European officer, Rai Bahadur Pandit Suraj Kaul and Rai Bahadur Pandit Bhag Ram.

2. William Digby, *Condemned Unheard.*

The President and Members of the Council, which was constituted on 18 April 1889, were appointed by the Government of India and held independent charge of their respective departments subject to the general control of the Resident who was the final referee in all matters. He might veto any resolution passed by the Council or suspend action thereon pending further explanation.

The Viceroy 'accepted' the *Irshad* with the following words: Notwithstanding the ample resources of your State, your treasury was empty; corruption and disorder prevailed in every department and every office; Your Highness was still surrounded by low and unworthy favourites and the continued misgovernment of your State was becoming, every day, a more serious source of anxiety." There was, of course, no mention of the fact that the Imperial Government was using the plea for people's welfare as a handle to control the State, a vital frontier region of India. William Digby, a Liberal Member of Parliament who strove hard to show that no misgovernment existed in Kashmir, exposed the real basis of this *Irshad*. Said he:

> While misgovernment and the alleged unhappy condition of the people of Kashmir were described as necessitating the action, these were not the whole, and there is grave reason to believe, not the real motives; the real motives being that fear of Russian aggression Indiawards which has led to the commission of so many questionable acts from time to time by the Government of India of the day, while it seems clear there was a desire to obtain complete control over, if not actual possession of, the kingdom of Kashmir.[3]

British Political Agency in Gilgit

"The key to the whole situation", wrote Digby "was felt in the pregnant words: 'It was Gilgit the Government wanted.'[4]

And very soon they got it. For it was significantly in the same year (1889) that the Gilgit Agency was re-established and as in the relations between the State and the British Government, so in regard to the relations between the Political Agent in Gilgit and the State, a radical change was effected. For, whereas even with the deputation of an Officer on Special Duty in 1877 the State retained complete control over Gilgit both in civil and political spheres, the

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 103.

officer being only an ordinary intelligence officer with no *locus standi*, the Political Agency constituted in 1889 was in sole charge of civil, military and political administration of the district. Stating the reasons for setting up a Political Agency, the Government of India in a despatch to the Secretary of State for India, stated: "the advance of Russia up to the frontiers of Afghanistan, and the great development of her military resources in Asia, had admittedly increased the necessity for strengthening our line of defence, and that among the points requiring special attention were the northern passes of the Hindukush, which afford a difficult but not impracticable route for a force large enough to cause excitement if nothing worse, in Kashmir and among the tribes of Bajour and perhaps at Jalalabad and on the Punjab frontier."

The *de facto* administration of the Gilgit frontier passed into the hands of the British officers and thus came into being the "Gilgit Agency". The acquisition of administrative control, however, was slow and imperceptible, nor was it categorically announced. It grew mostly due to the unfettered powers enjoyed by the British Resident in Kashmir.

With the setting up of the agency came up the question of the reorganisation of its defence. Captain A.G. Durand. the British Political Agent in Gilgit pointing out the miserable condition of the State troops already stationed there, wrote to the Resident from Camp Gakuch on 20 September 1889 that their salaries were in arrears for years, their uniforms were in a tattered condition and the pay was distributed only when the treasure arrived from Srinagar. The training and equipment of the State army had engaged the attention of the Resident from the date of his assumption of office. Prompt and energetic measures were taken to reorganise it on sound lines and after the reduction of "large masses of this armed rabble", small, compact bodies of "well trained, disciplined and regularly paid troops" came into existence. These regiments, called the Imperial Service troops, trained by British officers, consisted of three regiments and a mule battery, in all 2,000 men, mainly Gorkhas and Dogras. A contingent from these troops was sent to Gilgit to man the station there. By 1894 the Imperial Service troops in Gilgit had become an efficient force and "the Dogra officers were very keen and loyal. They were well-fed, disciplined and active".[5]

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5. Report of Mr Bruce, British Agent at Gilgit. See file No. 21, of 1894. Kashmir Govt. Records.

Along with the establishment of the Agency and the stationing of Imperial Service troops, communications between Gilgit and the rest of India were considerably improved. A 'Strategic road' fit for pack ponies and mules was built linking Gilgit with the Kashmir Valley and a telegraph line connected it with the Army Headquarters in India and the Residency in Srinagar. To feed the troops and to build up an arms and ammunition reserve in Gilgit, a semi-government concern, the Gilgit Transport Service, was given the contract for purchase of grains in the Valley and their carriage to Gilgit, as well as to keep the Burzil pass open all the year round. The heavy purchases of rice and wheat in Srinagar created famine conditions in the Valley. Thousands of Kashmiri villa- gers, pulled out of their agricultural operations, were forced to carry these supplies at nominal wages. During early spring when the Gilgit road was usually under snow, over 1,500 labourers were engaged in cutting a pathway over the Burzil pass. No wonder that "save us from Gilgit" was the prevailing outcry in Kashmir.

Hunza-Nagar Campaign

All this feverish activity culminated in the operations against Hunza and Nagar in 1891. The two chiefships bordering on Tsarist-held territories in Central Asia, had been brought under the suzerainty of Kashmir during Ranbir Singh's time and accepted the rule of the Agency when it was set up. They were accordingly paid an annual subsidy of 2,000 rupees. But in 1891 when "the frontier was much excited by the military promenade of the Russians on the Pamirs", the chiefs rose in organised revolt and marched at the head of their forces to capture the strategic fort of Chalt. Colonel Durand, the Political Agent at the time, however, forestalled them by occupying the fort, and the Hunza-Nagar forces withdrew. Colonel Durand commanding a force of Dogra and Gorkha soldiers launched a strong assault on the *Sangars* or breastwork which the tribesmen had thrown up for the defence of their fort overlooking the Nilt nullah. It was by a clever stratagem and personal bravery of these soldiers that the *Sangars* were overcome and the enemy positions captured. The State forces under General Suran Chand bore the brunt of the fighting and so did the State exchequer the expenditure involved in carrying this campaign to a successful conclusion. On 26 December 1891, the "Nagar Raja and his people made their submission," and "about 700 soldiers of the Raghu Partap Bodyguard and the artillery

under Kumedan Hazara Singh were distributed among the forts in Hunza and Nagar".

The army of Colonel Durand then occupied Misghar, the most extreme point to which British influence extended in the north. Having destroyed the power of these chiefs, the British government appointed them as governors of their principalities by a formal instrument issued in the name of the Maharaja, according to the terms of which the State and the Political Agent reserved practically unlimited rights of intervention not only in the external but also in the internal affairs of the territory. But though the Gilgit Agency advanced the British Imperial interests, the greater part of the expenditure on this account and on the administration of these districts was borne by the Jammu and Kashmir State. The expenditure covered not merely the cost of the maintenance of the Agency and State troops at Gilgit, but also of making roads, establishing dispensaries and schools and other normal functions of administration within the territories themselves. In return for this huge expenditure the State received a moiety of the revenue realised which was nominal in value, the total amount realised being itself insignificant.

Not only for Gilgit but for the Black Mountain and Chitral Expeditions, the Kashmir State had to contribute in men and money. Two regiments of the State with a total strength of over 1,500 of all ranks participated in the Black Mountain Expedition.

All this refutes the plea advanced by the British that the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh was effected in the interests of the people of the State who badly needed an efficient and honest administration and the development of the resources of their State.

Gradual Restoration of Powers to the Maharaja

Having achieved their objective, namely, the control of Gilgit and other frontier posts, the British Indian Government began to take a generous view of the restoration of powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh. In 1891 he was appointed the President of the Council, with Raja Amar Singh as its Vice-President. In 1893, the Queen conferred on him the title of the Grand Commander of the Star of India. At the investiture Darbar held in Srinagar the Resident complimented the Maharaja on the "present good government", and his loyalty to the "Paramount Power" shown "especially by the assistance His Highness rendered to the Imperial Government in the Black Mountain Expedition and Hunza-Nagar warfare."

But the Maharaja was only a figurehead. In a letter dated 29 January 1895, to the Residency Vakil, His Highness bemoans his lot — "I am supposed to be no factor in the machinery of the State and nobody cares for me." In another letter dated 7 September 1895, he writes: "I am not even allowed to sign papers for the Resident. I cannot even appoint a Tehsildar...Really I am quite helpless, nothing is in my hands."[6]

His appeals to the British for restoration of powers, however, resulted in a minor change in the Rules of Business of the Council in 1896. The Maharaja was given the power to "send for proceedings of the Council" and if he did not agree with any of its decisions or orders he could "refer it back to the Council". Every member had to prepare a synopsis of the work done by him outside the Council and send it to the Maharaja.[7]

By 1905 the Imperial Government had consolidated its position on the North-Western Frontiers of India. The relations with Afghanistan were cordial and Lord Curzon's formation of the new North-Western Frontier Province shifted the responsibility for frontier policy from Calcutta to Peshawar. The British were, therefore, inclined to take another step towards restoration of powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh.

In 1905 the State Council was abolished and its powers of administration conferred on the Maharaja by Lord Curzon himself.

The Maharaja was to be assisted by a chief minister, and three other ministers, namely, Revenue, Home and Judicial. All the ministers had to send the cases and their abstracts to the Maharaja through the chief minister. An abstract of orders and their disposal was to be sent to the Resident for his approval.[8]

The constitution established under this system provided:

i) The 'advice' of the Resident be followed whenever offered,

ii) The budget be prepared and passed in consultation with the Resident,

iii) No Resolution of the late State Council be cancelled or modified without consulting the Residency, and

6. Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. 1 of 1892.
7. Ibid., File No. 48 of 1899.
8. Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. 90 C/En. Bloc C of 1905.

iv) The appointment of all ministers and any other important officials be made with the concurrence of the Government of India.

In 1909, Raja Amar Singh who had played a prominent part in the political drama of the State passed away. Raja Ram Singh the third brother had already died in 1899. Maharaja Pratap Singh from then on wielded his partially restored powers with greater authority.

During the First World War the Maharaja placed all the resources of his State at the disposal of the British Imperial Government. With the rising tide of freedom movement in India, the British Government was reorientating its policy towards the states which they believed would act as breakwaters during the impending mass risings in India. So Maharaja Pratap Singh's chances of gaining full powers looked brighter, particularly when he was in his old age.

On 18 September 1920, the Maharaja applied to the Viceroy to restore him the powers which had been snatched away from him in 1889 and partially restored in 1905. He pleaded that he had rendered valuable services during the War and that he was at the fag end of his life. The Viceroy replied that the Maharaja would be restored full powers on condition that he gave a confidential undertaking that he would seek the advice of the Resident in all matters connected with the frontier, important changes in the administration, etc. Pratap Singh protested and said that such an undertaking would in fact be perpetuating the old restrictions on his powers. Subsequently the Viceroy demanded only a confidential undertaking regarding Maharaja's consultations with the Resident on all matters pertaining to the frontier and some important administrative changes. The Maharaja acquiesed and in March 1921, Lord Chelmsford restored full powers to him in a Darbar held at Jammu.[9]

It appears from the directive issued by the Maharaja to the Chief Secretary that he had an intention of establishing a Legislative Assembly in the State simultaneously with the formation of an Executive Council. But due to outbreak of communal disturbances in the State the constitutional reforms were not implemented. The Executive Council of five members with himself as its President was installed by the Maharaja in January 1924. All administrative orders were passed by the members who were apportioned portfolios by the Maharaja. The latter retained the power of veto. The Council

9. Ibid., File No. 104, Bloc C of 1920.

continued to function till the Maharaja's death in September 1925.[10]

Land Settlement

From this brief account of the political events during Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, emerges the glaring fact that the Imperial Government, determined to control Gilgit and the Ladakh borders, reduced the Maharaja to a figurehead and itself wielded real powers through the Resident. In this process the people of Kashmir incidentally made sizeable progress towards prosperity. Several reforms in administration, land settlement and public beneficiary activities resulted from the imposition of a *de facto* British rule. The Resident by actively controlling the administration transformed Kashmir from a medieval to the near-modern age. British officers were put in charge of important departments like the Revenue, Accounts, Police, Forest, and Customs, and they organised them on the Punjab model. But the foremost and beneficial reform which completely changed the outlook of the peasant and gave him a new hope and incentive to work was the land settlement and revenue assessment carried through by Sir Walter Lawrence whose memory is still cherished and revered by the inhabitants of the Valley.

Old System of Administration

The happiness and the welfare of the people in India generally depends almost entirely on the revenue system and the methods of taxation. When Maharaja Pratap Singh ascended the throne in 1885, the system was not only faulty and inefficient, but it was palpably corrupt. There were no records or maps to indicate what a man's holding in land amounted to, or to show what his revenue liabilities were. The *patwari*, or the village accountant, entered the rough area of a holding of each villager on cramped pieces of paper or birch-bark, hiding them away in the deep pockets of his ample gown. The area of the holding was not ascertained by measurement but was calculated by the amount of seed required for each field, and often the headman and influential people in a village were shown as requiring less seed to cultivate their lands with and consequently to be liable to payment of lesser revenue than their poorer brethren who in reality held only a fraction of the areas possessed by the powerful members of the village.

10. Ibid., File No. 239/10, Bloc C of 1921.

Over the *patwari* was a *tahsildar* and one or two *naib-tahsildars*. There were 15 tahsils in the Valley, divided into three districts or *wazarat*, presided over by officers known as *wazir-i-wazarat*. These in turn were subordinate to the *hakim-i-ala* or governor with his revenue establishment known as the *daftar-i-diwani*.

Land settlement was not, however, new to the Valley. We have already noted that in the early Hindu period land was the main source of State revenue. Then the State was contented with one-sixth of the produce. In the time of the Sultans, the State took one-half. Their Mughal successors, who found the Valley in a ruined condition, considered that one-half of the produce of the country would not suffice for the wants of the troops and city population, and accordingly decreed that the cultivating classes should dispense with grain for three months and should live on fruits, and they accordingly fixed the State's share at three-quarters of the produce of the land.

Coming down to later times we find in 1895 AD the Valley parcelled out among *kardars*, who were land agents of the State, with very large powers. It was the duty of a *kardar* to get the largest possible quantity of grain for the State, and for this purpose he would arrange the cultivation of his estate in such a way that a family consisting of a man, his wife and adult child who formed a unit for cultivation, would get four acres of irrigated land. The State took three-quarters of rice, maize, millets, and buck-wheat, and of oil-seeds, pulses and cotton, the share taken was nine-sixteenth.

In 1880, Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried to make a cash assessment, but it was a cash assessment only in name, and it rested with the *Hakim-i-Ala* to say, year by year, how much of the assessment he would take in cash and how much in kind. And even this reform was defeated in its purpose by the unsympathetic officials who made no attempt to inspect villages or to ascertain the condition of the cultivators and the state of irrigation or of cultivation.

In 1882, the pernicious system of auctioning the land revenue of a village to the highest bidder was instituted. Those who bid for villages knew nothing of the capacity of the village and cared less, for they were speculating on a year's crops, and if they were not good, the successful bidders after taking all they could wring from the villagers, absconded without paying the State a single rupee. Later on came into existence the *mujawaza* or collection of land revenue in kind for sale to the city population. No wonder the villages ran into

enormous arrears of revenue which accumulated year after year, weighing down the poor peasants under a heavy burden.[11]

The machinery to work this defective and pernicious method of collecting land revenue could not but be corrupt and inefficient. Miserably low salaries were paid to the *patwari* and Tahsildar and there was no reward for honest or efficient work. Even the meagre salaries were not paid in cash but in kind. No wonder these officials took the fullest advantage of the opportunities for peculation afforded by this defective system. Besides, they enjoyed other perquisites known as *rasum*. A typical village had to pay in *rasum* to the officials as much as 270 rupees in addition to the revenue. When one considers that each *tahsil* had an average of 150 to 200 villages, it was not surprising that the officials never grumbled at their low pay, and never complained if their pay was greatly in arrears.

Over and above the land revenue and its appanage of *rasum*, the villager was subjected to other taxes. Silk, saffron, violets, various kinds of forest products, hemp, tobacco, water-nuts and paper formed the State monopoly. "The right to legalize marriages was farmed out and it is said that the office of grave-digger was also taxed. Without going into details it may be said that nearly everything save air and water was brought under taxation."[12]

Features of Lawrence's Settlement

It is not, therefore, surprising that "in 1889, the Kashmir State was bankrupt. The rich land was left uncultivated, and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still the soldiers came at harvest time; and when the share of the State had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little grain to tide the unfortunate peasants over the cruel winter, when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero."[13]

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11. "In nearly every village there are huge arrears of revenue, the greater part of which was absolutely fictitious. The famine of 1877-79 naturally caused heavy arrears which could not and ought not to have been realised. Then came the auction sales of 1882, by which the revenue was run up by men who were mere speculators, and had no intention of paying the amounts which they had bid for the farm of the villages. The increase offered by these farmers, but never paid by them, was considered as part of the revenue demand, and has been solemnly entered year by year as an arrear against the villages." — Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 408.
12. Ibid, p. 417.
13. Lawrence, *The India We Served*, pp. 128, 134.

So when in 1889, Sir Walter Lawrence was entrusted with the settlement of the Valley, he found the work not only enormous, but a powerful opposition of the privileged official class and lazy city people ready to sabotage his efforts. The work of settlement had in fact been taken in hand two years earlier by Mr A. Wingate, but he had to give it up in the face of bitter opposition and intrigue. Sir Walter, however, persisted and completed the work in the Valley by 1893. By the year 1912 practically every *tahsil* and district in the State was either settled for the first time or in revision.

The main features of the settlement, as finally effected by Lawrence, were:

i) The State demand was fixed for 14 years;

ii) Payment in cash was substituted for payment in kind;

iii) The use of force in the collection of revenue was done away with;

iv) *Begar* or forced labour in its more objectionable form was abolished;

v) Occupancy rights were conferred on cultivators in undisputed lands;

vi) The area of privileged holders of land in excess of sanctioned area was assessed at ordinary rates;

vii) Wastelands were entered as *Khalsa,* but preferential rights for acquisition of such lands by tenants was granted;

viii) Permanent but non-alienable hereditary rights were granted to those who accepted the first assessment;

ix) All land was carefully evaluated on the basis of produce, previous collection and possibility of irrigation; and

x) The *rasum* and other exactions were abolished and the rents and liabilities of cultivators were defined.

At the conclusion of Lawrence's beneficial and memorable work, the Maharaja, against the wishes of his courtiers, wrote off arrears of land revenue amounting to 31 lakhs of rupees.

Abolition of Begar or Forced Labour

The remission of arrears and the abolition of objectionable forms of *begar* or forced labour freed the peasantry from a haunting fear which had fallen to its lot for generations.

The genesis of the pernicious system of *begar* has already been mentioned. *Begar* came to mean to the Kashmiri far more than the mere impressment of labour, for under its comprehensive name was included every kind of demand for labour or property taken but not paid for by the officers. The custom became widespread during the Afghan and Sikh times. The feeble attempts made by Maharaja Gulab Singh towards mitigating some of its rigorous practices, however, did not improve matters.

The famine of 1877-79 denuded the villages of most of their inhabitants and consequently there was a great pressure on the slender labour resources of the Valley. The building of the Gilgit road and provision of supplies to its garrison, demanded a large number of labourers who could only be recruited to this work by force. The proper cultivation of the soil, and of their chief staple, rice, are of so exacting a nature that great damage can be caused if the cultivators are kept away too long from the villages. But in spite of this, the incidence of *begar* fell with severity on them, for most of the inhabitants of the city had secured exemption on one pretext or the other. "Gilgit", writes Lawrence, "is to the Kashmiri a constant terror, and when it was rumoured that transport was wanted to convey the baggage of the troops going to or coming from Gilgit there was a general stampede among the villagers."[14]

The State Government at the persistent request of the Resident finally decided in 1891 to abolish *begar*. But at the same time it was felt that the transport arrangements of the Valley would collapse. *Begar* had prevented any labour class to grow and it would take at least a few years for it to come into existence. To tide over the period of transition, a scheme was formulated to do away with the most objectionable features of *begar* at once, and at the same time prevent a collapse of the transport system.

The author of this scheme was Sir Walter Lawrence. Requisition of forced labour for government officials was abolished forthwith, and on the completion of the Gilgit road, carriage of goods to Gilgit by forced and unpaid labour was also done away with. The State Council framed elaborate rules for controlling the labour required for carriage of essential commodities in the State by labourers. A labourer was to be paid 5 rupees per month.[15]

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14. Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 413.
15. Kashmir Government Records, File No. 34 of 1891.

The working of the new scheme was reviewed in 1906 and it was further modified in that the rate of wages was increased to 8 rupees per month and as by that time voluntary labour was forthcoming, the use of force in recruiting it was given up.[16] It was only in 1920 that *begar* was abolished completely.

Development of Road Communications

The need for enforcing *begar* for carriage purposes abated considerably with another revolutionary undertaking, namely, the building of a first-rate cart-road down the Jhelum valley linking Srinagar with Rawalpindi, the nearest rail-head, 200 miles away. Previous to this, as Sir Walter Lawrence writing in 1890 tells, there was an absence of roads fit for wheeled traffic in the Valley. Except low trollies resting on wheels, roughly fashioned from the round trunk of trees and used for carrying crops, there was no other kind of wheeled carriage in Kashmir.

By the end of the 19th century, Kashmir had acquired an importance in the context of the Anglo-Russian strategy in Asia. The British were menaced by Russian advance in Central Asia, "and it was necessary," observes Biscoe, "that we should have a road for our troops in order to resist, if necessary, any attack from that quarter."[17] It was then that the project of linking up the Valley by a cart-road with the rail-head at Rawalpindi — an important cantonment — was carried through.

The great work, commenced in 1880, was completed in September 1890, when Maharaja Pratap Singh was driven through from Baramula to Kohala on the borders of his State. The resident entrusted the work to a British-owned firm of contractors, Spedding, Mitchel and Co., who bringing in European engineers and several hundreds of Pathans and other labourers, completed the difficult job in record time. The distance from Rawalpindi to Srinagar took only four days to cover in a tonga; and heavy goods, carried on bullock-carts, reached Srinagar in 20 days.

The traditional route over the Banihal Pass through whose defiles kings and armies had crept during the Mughal and Sikh times, naturally fell into disuse and neglect. This had an adverse effect on the trade between the two major regions of the State — Jammu and the

16. Ibid, File No. 77-p/100 of 1906.
17. *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p. 30.

Valley. It was in 1912 when powers had been partly restored to the Maharaja that one of his far-sighted ministers, Dr A. Mitra, worked out a plan to construct a cart-road over the Banihal. Work was begun in 1913 and the first vehicle, a horse-drawn carriage, crossed over in 1915. Srinagar was thus directly linked with Jammu, 200 miles away. The railway line had already been extended from Sialkot to Jammu in 1890.

Tourist Traffic

Along with the building of the Jhelum valley and Banihal roads, many former bridle-paths in the Valley were converted into roads for cart traffic. Telegraph lines, originally laid during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign, were extended to all the important towns in the Valley and to Gilgit and Ladakh. Telephone connection between Jammu and Srinagar was also set up.

The opening up of the Valley had naturally far-reaching political and economic effect on the life and culture of its inhabitants. So far living in seclusion, they now came in close and direct contact with the people living in the rest of India.

A conspicuous result was the increasing influx of European and Indian tourists to the Valley. The fame of Kashmir's scenic beauty and salubrious climate had already travelled to distant corners of the world, and the prophecy of G.T. Vigne, who visited the Valley in 1835, "that Kashmir will become the *sine qua non* of the Oriental traveller" was nearly coming true. Efforts were made both by the Imperial Government in Calcutta and political parties in England to bring pressure on the Maharaja to allow Europeans to acquire or own land in Kashmir with a view to turning it into a colony for British retired officers to settle in. But the Maharaja, backed by the leading nobles of the Valley, stubbornly opposed the move.

The Houseboat

To this ban may be attributed the development of the houseboat which has become an unique institution in Kashmir. Due to lack of suitable accommodation, the visitors, whose number was increasing year after year, were put to great inconvenience and as the Maharaja's Government would not allow them to own or build houses in Kashmir the *doonga*, an indigenous boat was by and by transformed into a modern houseboat.

The credit for building the first houseboat strangely enough goes to a member of the Kashmiri Pandits, a community which had from ancient times nothing to do with the profession of boat building or boatmen. Pandit Naraindas belonged to a respectable family and was one of the first five Kashmiris to learn English from Rev. Doxey, the founder of the famous Kashmir Mission School in 1881. Declining to enter the traditional profession of quill-driving, he after leaving the school, set up a small store to cater to the needs of the European visitors. But unfortunately his shop was burnt down and finding it difficult to obtain a suitable shop he removed whatever he would save from the fire into a *doonga*. To his agreeable surprise he found that a *doonga* served as a better shop since it could be moored at a convenient and central place to the visitors. But rain and snow played havoc with his stores and he got an idea of having planks and shingle to replace the matting walls and roof of the *doonga*. When the first boat was ready and afloat, an officer took a fancy to it and purchased it at a handsome profit. Pandit Naraindas found that boat building was a better business proposition than running a European store and soon he became the premier boat-builder of Kashmir, his yard turning out many a famous and well-built boat. His idea was later on improved upon by Colonel R. Sartorius, *VC*, Sir R. Harvey, Bart., and Mr Martyn Kennard. Most of these houseboats are from 65 to 95 feet in length and about 14 feet in width. They are partitioned into a sitting, a dining and two or three bedrooms and a pantry with the required number of bathrooms and lavatories. They are equipped with modern furniture and many have sanitary fittings as well.

Medical Relief

The development of rapid and easy means of communication, no doubt, bestowed manifold blessings on the people of the Valley, but there came also its concomitant evils. The two roads with a growing traffic resulted in an increased import of diseases, particularly cholera. Epidemics became more frequent and combined with the insanitary and squalid conditions which prevailed in the city and towns, took a heavy toll of life. Due to insufficient diet and suppression of human liberty under the Afghans, the Sikhs and early Dogra rulers, the vitality of the people had been sapped and they fell an easy prey to cholera and other diseases. The worst epidemic was in 1892 when over 10,000 people died of it in the Valley. Writes Lawrence:

I was in camp during the epidemic, and moved through some of the most infected centres, and I believe that owing to the panic which set in, the registration in the districts was not so careful as it may have been in the city, and that 5,931 deaths does not represent nearly the total mortality from cholera in the villages. Terrible gaps have been left in many families and villages which I know. Epidemics of cholera occurred later in 1896, 1902, 1906-07 and 1910 and an outbreak of plague in 1903-04.

Vigorous measures were taken to prevent the recurrence of epidemics by sanitating Srinagar and making available to the citizens clean and wholesome pipe-water. Roads and streets in the city were widened and paved, latrines built and arrangements for scavenging made. Vaccination against smallpox was first introduced in 1894.

As mentioned earlier, the Church Missionary Society of England set up a Medical Mission in Kashmir during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign. With their selfless zeal, the two Neve brothers (Drs Ernest and Arthur Neve) rendered medical aid to suffering humanity in Kashmir. Later the State government under the advice of the Resident opened a well-equipped hospital in Srinagar with Dr A. Mitra as its first Chief Medical officer. Dr Mitra with his untiring efforts was also responsible for establishing a municipality in Srinagar and opening a number of hospitals and dispensaries all over the State. A women's hospital was opened in Srinagar and another in Jammu. With the growth of education among the people and the extension of medical facilities, the incidence of epidemics was considerably reduced.

Flood Protection Measures

The people whose material resources were on the increase with the dawn of the 20th century had, however, to contend with another natural calamity which periodically visited the Valley. It has already been mentioned that the formation of the Valley makes it liable to heavy floods. During the Dogra rule there occurred several serious floods particularly in 1893 and 1903. The latter resulted from a heavy rainfall which continued for 48 hours in the month of July bringing down enormous quantities of melted snow from the surrounding mountains and in its wake causing destruction to life and property.

The expansion of Srinagar had started with the beginning of the present century in a haphazard way. The low-lying land towards the

south had developed into Civil Lines where there were European shops and hutments. The flood of 1903 swept away this locality and the Resident, Sir Luis Dane, decided to undertake flood protection measures on a long-term basis. The State Engineer, Mr Field, in collaboration with the Electrical Engineer, Major A. de Lotbiniere were detailed to prepare a comprehensive scheme in this respect. After a survey of several months they submitted their note and chief recommendations.

These engineers seemed to have followed strictly the measures taken by Suyya 1,200 years ago. They recommended that to give a quicker and a wider outlet to the flood waters of the Valley, the bed of the river from the Wular lake to Baramula be deepened and widened. This was to be done by dredgers to be run by electric power which the engineers proposed to generate at Mahora, 16 miles lower down. It is interesting to know that originally this powerhouse which later on supplied electricity to the city was meant exclusively for dredging operations.

Another important recommendation of the engineers was to dig a spill channel from above Srinagar to a point 15 miles below it towards its west. This they thought would carry a large amount of flood-waters and would definitely help in saving the city from destruction.

In 1905-06 the machinery required for the hydroelectric generating plant at Mahora and the dredgers for deepening of the bed of the river at Baramula were ordered from America. The Mahora powerhouse was completed by the end of 1907. Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that it was the second hydroelectric project then in India, the first one being in Mysore.[18]

Dredging operations began in 1908 and by 1912 an area of 6,100 acres was reclaimed from around the Wular lake. It was allotted to cultivators for paddy cultivation.

Fortunately for the Valley there were no major floods for a quarter of a century. The dredging operations, though valuable in their own way, were looked down upon by the State as useless expenditure and in 1917 the dredgers were sold as junk. The result was that the old story of silting up of the river bed in the Wular lake was repeated and when in 1928 there was a flood towards the end of August, the low-lying parts of the city of Srinagar which had by then extended to a larger

18. Kashmir Govt. Records, File Nos. 128/B-14, and 237 of 1906, and 163/b-74 of 1912.

area were inundated and destruction was caused to the standing crops. Again the State government woke up to taking flood protection measures, but instead of having a long-term view of the problem, they started again to build high bunds round the low-lying parts of Srinagar — the chief aim being to save the city at the cost of the rest of the Valley.

Food Control Scheme

With the return of stability in land tenures, development of communications, adoption of flood protection measures and prevention of epidemics, there was a rapid increase in population by 1911. But in a place so predominantly agricultural and with such limited scope for increase in cultivable area and equally restricted sphere of expansion of agriculture, the need for industrialisation to relieve the pressure on land was becoming imperative. True, the Kashmir government built a number of canals and repaired several which had fallen into disuse, but the increase in agricultural production was not commensurate with the increase in population. The result was an acute shortage of foodstuffs towards 1918. The State government, after long deliberations and trial of several schemes, finally adopted the old system of collecting a part of land revenue in kind and distributing it to the city population at a cheap rate. Thus came into being the Food Control Department which has ever since handled the collection and distribution of foodgrains in the Valley.[19]

The scheme had two objects in view. While on the one hand, it sought to come to the rescue of the poor peasant by advancing him cash for payment of land revenue, on the other hand it sold the paddy recovered from the peasant during the harvesting season to the citizens of Srinagar at a nominal profit. An efficient card system was devised for distribution of paddy to the citizens at the rate of 42 lbs. per head per month. Well-designed granaries were erected at Srinagar for storing a year's supply of grain. This system worked admirably well and stood the stress of rising prices even during the Second World War.

Sericulture and Other Industries

With the development of popular tourism, there came some relief as there was an increased demand for greater production of artistic articles for which Kashmir was famous from ancient times. Tourism

19. Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. 245/Sh..-184 of 1921.

benefited boatmen, traders, and servants who worked each summer for the tourist trade.

Sericulture too gave employment to a large number of workers in Srinagar, and to numerous peasants who reared the silkworms in their homes during their spare time. The ancient industry was dead during the Afghan rule and continued to be so under the Sikhs. Maharaja Ranbir Singh attempted to revive it. But it was only after the accession of Maharaja Pratap Singh to the *gaddi* that serious efforts were made to set up the industry and run it on a commercial scale and in a scientific and extensive manner. Seed was imported from Italy and France and distributed among the peasants for rearing cocoons. A factory with large filatures containing over 300 basins for reeling cocoons was set up in Srinagar in 1907 and by 1921 the factory was having five filatures with over 1,500 reeling and 760 cooking basins. Over 50,000 rearers of silkworms in the villages and 5,000 labourers in the factory at Srinagar produced over one lakh kilograms of raw silk annually.

In 1901, one Major Anderson formed a firm called the Kashmir Mining Company and applied for and was given an exploring licence for the whole of the State. In 1906 he was given another licence under the new Mining Rules for prospecting in Reasi and Rajauri. In 1907 he secured a mining and prospecting licence for the sapphire mines of Padar in Bhadarwah *tahsil.* He succeeded in extracting that year sapphires worth over 19,000 rupees. During the next two years he obtained sapphires to the gross value of 105,000 rupees out of which he paid 30 per cent in royalty.

Improvement in Horticulture

But in the case of improving the indigenous fruits of Kashmir, and introducing the European varieties, credit goes entirely to French experts. The fact that there were possibilities of turning Kashmir into an orchard producing different kinds of delicate fruits and vegetables, was noted by all the European travellers from Bernier to Vigne. The story of modern horticulture in Kashmir is interesting.

From 1856 French firms in Paris began sending agents to the Valley for the purchase of shawls. One of these agents, M. Dauvergne, who was in Kashmir from 1865 to 1882 observing the grapevines growing wild in the Valley, conceived the idea of making wine for his own consumption. News of his experiment reached Maharaja

Ranbir Singh who asked M. Dauvergne to continue the manufacturing process on behalf of the State government. The Frenchman explained that unless the quality of vines was improved and better varieties were imported from Europe and an expert in making wines and cognac called from France, the wine-making industry could not be satisfactorily improved.

M. Ermens, formerly head gardener of public works in Paris, who was approached through the School of Horticulture at Versailles, came to Kashmir and made a thorough investigation of the soil, climate, rainfall and other conditions prevailing in the State. He submitted a report for importing various varieties of grapevines. Being a gardener by profession, M. Ermens brought with himself considerable number of fruit plants which he believed would thrive in Kashmir, together with implements for starting an experimental agricultural farm.

The vine cuttings and fruit trees were planted in Chashma Shahi in 1875 and four years later, when the grapes were plucked, M. Ermens experimented in making wine, but not being a distiller himself, his efforts did not meet with success. He recommended the securing of the services of two more experts — one to take charge of vineyards and the other to undertake the manufacturing process. These positions were filled by M. Bouley and M. Peychaud respectively.

These experts, however, thought that in the absence of a cart-road linking the Valley with the rest of India, wine manufacturing industry could not be run profitably. They, however, realised the abundant scope for the production of high class fruits of European type. M. Bouley retired in 1887 and M. Peychaud continued the work alone. With the help of Sirdar Roop Singh, then Governor of the Valley, he collected during the winter months of 1886-87 about 25,000 wild fruit stocks, and this was the beginning of a nursery which has proved of incalculable benefit to the State. Grafted fruit plants were subsequently distributed to the State orchards. The State established a Department of Agriculture and Horticulture in 1907 and from 1908 a member from Kashmir sat on the Board of Agriculture of the Government of India.[20] The fruit industry has flourished since then and with the passage of time has acquired a leading position in the export trade of Kashmir.

20. Kashmir Government Records, File No. 33 of 1907.

The State Subject Question

A stable government and the measures taken for promoting people's welfare, resulted in a phenomenal growth of population in the Valley. Whereas in 1891 when the first census was conducted in the State, the population of the Valley including Muzaffarabad was only 814,241, it rose to 1,407,086 in 1921. The progress in various fields was not, however, achieved without the indigenous inhabitants paying a heavy price in the loss of their liberty, and bearing of contumely and disrespect from the arrogant bands of officers and clerks imported wholesale from the Punjab to run the administration.

For, one of the first orders issued by the State Council on its constitution in 1889 was to change the court language from Persian to Urdu. This sudden and ruthless change took the old State officials by surprise, and being dubbed as incompetent and corrupt they were thrown out of the job. With three members of the Council hailing from the Punjab, the administrative vacancies were quickly filled up with the Punjabis and this influx continued till 1925, when the Maharaja had, following relentless pressure from the inhabitants of the State, to stop it by decree.

Opposition to the sudden changeover from Persian to Urdu came almost immediately from the people.[21] But since the Resident was wielding unlimited powers, it was a cry in the wilderness. The poor Kashmiri, illiterate and leaderless, could not command a hearing. Patiently, however, he bore all the abuses that were heaped upon him. Sir Walter Lawrence wrote:

> I think that many of the hard things said about the Kashmiris, are due to the fact that the official interpreters of their character have been foreigners, often grasping and corrupt, always unsympathetic. Mughal Subhedars and Pathan Sirdars dismissed all difficulties of administration and all humane suggestions emanating from their masters with the remark that the Kashmiris were dishonest, treacherous and *Zulum parast.*

Growth of Education

With the passage of time and increase in the number of young

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21. Rules were framed to hold competitive examinations for appointment to State service. The rules were very stiff since no Kashmiri was even a matriculate then. Thus Punjabis were imported in large numbers. Kashmir Government Records, File No. 24 of 1891.

men educated in the schools teaching English, there grew an acute bitterness between the inhabitants of the State and the Punjabi officials who had occupied every position of vantage in the administrative set-up.

The education of the pattern imparted by schools and colleges in the rest of the country began late in the State. The Mission School, the first to follow the University syllabus, was originally established by the Rev. J.S. Doxey in 1881, with only five boys on its roll. The good missionary content at having made a beginning and confident of its expansion persevered in his labours for two years after which he was succeeded by the Rev. J. Hinton Knowles who worked hard, and with his untiring zeal and tact the school made rapid progress. In 1892 when he handed over the charge to Rev. C. Tyndale Biscoe, the number on the roll was over 500. The school made sustained progress under Rev. Biscoe and produced boys not only educated in English and other subjects, but moulded in the best traditions of an English Public School.

The State School, a sister institution, run by the State government was established originally by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1874, but it was a school in which education was imparted in Sanskrit and Persian. In 1886, Dr A. Mitra raised the status of this institution to a regular school introducing English teaching and imparting education according to the University curriculum. Both the schools turned out a large number of matriculates every year who clamoured for government jobs, to be given to them in preference to the Punjabis. The persistent representation of the people, backed by the Maharaja, to the Government of India, resulted in instructions being issued to the State to give preference to the *mulkis* over the outsiders in the matter of employment. But the instructions were vague and very soon all those whose relations were in government service declared themselves to be *mulkis*. The struggle continued and in 1912 a definition of 'State subject' was formulated for the first time. A State subject was one who had obtained an *ijazatnama* or permission from the Maharaja's government to own land. But anybody could secure this permission without any effort, and the influx of outsiders continued unabated.

But the Kashmiris had by then made further advance in education. Early in 1905 a college was established at Srinagar through the efforts of Mrs Annie Besant and another at Jammu in 1908. Many young men passed through their portals having drunk deep at the fountain

of Western political thought. The agitation over Curzon's Partition of Bengal, the movements for political freedom in Turkey, Ireland and Egypt, the growing strength of the Indian National Congress, filled these young men with ideas of freedom and equality and several of them, notably Pandit Shankar Lal Kaul, carried on a relentless agitation in the Indian Press for Kashmiris to be exclusively employed to man the administration of the State. Ultimately, the State government yielded to the pressure of public opinion and accepted the principle of recruiting only State subjects to government posts.

This agitation was mainly carried only by the Kashmiri Pandits who had originally suffered from the changeover from Persian to Urdu and whose main occupation was government service. It was this community particularly which took to the new educational courses and very soon came up to the standard required for recruitment to the various categories of government service. However the agitation they conducted was on purely secular basis — for all the people of the State irrespective of the religion or caste to which they belonged. Modern education among Muslims was frowned upon by their religious leaders who wielded enormous influence among the masses.

The First Signs of Political Unrest

Meanwhile several influential Kashmiri Muslims settled in the rest of India, raised their voice against the policy of inaction followed by the State government with regard to educating the Muslims of the State. Finally in 1916, the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, Mr Sharp, was requested by the State government to make recommendations in the light of the conditions prevailing in the State. Mr Sharp submitted his report after a thorough study of the problem and the Maharaja accepted his recommendations in toto.

The Muslims were thus a frustrated community and in 1924 when the Viceroy, Lord Reading, visited the State, some of the leading members of the community submitted a memorial to him demanding the grant of proprietary rights in land to the peasants,[22] a larger

22. In a letter dated 13 December 1918, to his Chief Minister, the Maharaja wrote:
"As you are already aware the proprietary rights in all the lands of Kashmir belong to the ruling Chief exclusively, for the simple reason that the territories of Kashmir were purchased by my late lamented grand-father, Maharaja Gulab Singhji, and hence any sale of such land by anyone else is illega." — Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. 191/H-75, Bloc C of 1906.

representation of Muslims in government service, improvement in the condition of Muhammadan education in the State; abolition of *begar* in all its aspects; and the restoration of mosques in possession of the government. The Maharaja to whom full powers had been restored two years earlier was greatly incensed at the submission of the memorial to the Viceroy. This was ascribed to the general swing all over India towards communal politics engineered by the British. There were moreover some demonstrations in the State-owned silk factory in Srinagar and also pseudo-political disturbances in the city. But these were in an elementary stage and the Maharaja's government put them down with a firm hand. Some of the signatories to the memorial were externed and their property confiscated. While the discontent was seething and there was an ominous calm indicating the coming of a storm, Maharaja Pratap Singh breathed his last in September 1925. Having no male heir of his own, he was succeeded by his nephew, Raja Hari Singh.

Intensely devoted to his religion, Maharaja Pratap Singh was a benevolent ruler. The secret of his popularity was accessibility to his presence by the humblest of his subjects. Possessing a remarkable memory, he followed the grievances of a petitioner and reprimanded the officer who neglected to redress them. He was genuinely anxious to see his people prosper, but at the same time he was jealous of permitting them to form political or even religious societies or establishing a press.

Scarcely a day passed without some striking act on his part of generosity, benevolence and practical sympathy for those who were in trouble, and for righteous indignation for anything that was mean, cruel or oppressive. And it may rightly be said that the long spell of peace and security that the people enjoyed during his reign was responsible for a growing consciousness of their rights and privileges and served as a stage to launch their struggle for the achievement of a democratic government in Free India.

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STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the *gaddi* with a large fund of his subjects' good will to his credit. Born in 1895, he inherited a fine physique, good looks, intelligence and riches from his father, Raja Amar Singh. After the latter's death in 1909 the British Indian Government took a keen interest in the education and upbringing of the prince. Major H.K. Barr was appointed his guardian and he continued in the appointment till 1918 when the prince attained his majority. Even during the time when Major Barr went on leave, the guardianship was entrusted to another British officer, Captain Burge.[1] His education was supervised by English teachers in the Mayo Collage, Ajmer, which he entered in 1908. After completing the full course of studies there, he received training in the Imperial Cadet Crops, Dehra Dun. In 1915 Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed him as the commander-in-chief of the State forces.

During the First World War, Raja Hari Singh was responsible for the training and equipment of the units of the State army which were sent to the front. These units won laurels in several battles in France, Palestine and East Africa. He made a personal donation of 43 Lakh rupees to the War Fund. But all these services to the British did not save him from becoming "the victim of an unscrupulous attempt at blackmail in the big way, and for a few days in 1921 the case of `Mr. A' was to monopolise the headlines of certain British newspapers."[2]

In 1922, when on the restoration of full powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh, a State Council was again formed to assist the Maharaja in the conduct of administration, Raja Hari Singh was appointed its Senior Member. In this capacity he came in contact with the people and made an attempt to understand their problems and difficulties.

1. Kashmir Govt. Records. File No. 218, Bloc C of 1909.
2. Birdwood, *Two Nations and Kashmir*, p. 31

He won their confidence by his zealous efforts to solve the food problems when there prevailed scarcity conditions in 1921-22. It was due to his intelligent handling of the situation that averted a severe famine in the Valley. He favoured the appointment of State subjects to all posts in the administration. He was not dominated by members of any religious faction and placed his trust equally in his Hindu and Muslim officials.

Popularity of the New Maharaja

No wonder the educated classes in the State placed great hopes in the young Maharaja. Though the disproportionate expenditure of the state funds on the occasion of his *Rajtilak* ceremony, celebrated in Jammu in March 1926, gave rise to misgivings, these were quickly removed by the new Maharaja's promulgation of the Ariculturists' Relief Regulation, which released the cultivator from the clutches of the usurious moneylender, the Compulsory Education Act which made primary education compulsory for boys in the cities of Jammu and Srinagar, the Prevention of Infants Marriage Act, which made it penal for parents to marry boys and girls before attaining the age of 18 and 14 respectively, by the definition of the 'State subjects', and their exclusive appointment to government jobs. He announced that as Maharaja his religion was 'justice', and attended the Id prayers of the Muslims in Srinagar.

Seething Discontent

But the popularity of the Maharaja was short-lived. Very soon he came under the influence of Advisers and court favourites who were neither intelligent nor had the good of the State and its people at heart. Unlike his predecessors, Maharaja Hari Singh lived in, so to say, an ivory tower surrounded by his few mean favourites having no personal contact with the people, who through centuries of suppression and misrule were growing under the burden of heavy taxation, and want. The proud Maharaja, ignorant of the forces that were rising at his feet, indulged in cheap pleasures of life and spent most of his time outside the State. The apparent calm and docility of the people lulled him to a false sense of security.

But all was not quiet in the State or in the rest of the country. The educated classes in Kashmir were becoming restless particularly due to growing unemployment among them. And when they witnessed the appointment of Dogra Rajputs of mediocre abilities to

high government posts, their frustration turned to anger. The Muslims who formed the majority in the State, took to education late, and the few young men who passed the various examinations of the Universities in India, faced a stiff competition from more highly qualified Hindu youth. As it was, the governmental machinery came to be manned entirely by people professing the Hindu religion.

The increase in population and the consequent pressure on land made the lot of the peasant pitiable indeed. The onsetting of trade depression all over the world reduced the workmen and petty shopkeepers to low straits. The shawl embroiderers and the papier mache artists were thrown out of job. Distress and frustration were writ large on every face.

The Maharaja's administration was still functioning in the old bureaucratic fashion. Disgusted at the unimaginative mind of the ruler and his advisers, Sir Albion Banerji who was Foreign and Political Minister of the State for two years, resigned the post. His observations regarding the political, social and economic conditions prevailing in the State made in a press interview, created an uproar in the country and produced a deep effect on the minds of the people of the State. He said:

> "Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Muhammadan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the Government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present little or no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances.
>
> "There is hardly any public opinion in the State. As regards the Press it is practically non-existent with the result that the government is not benefited to the extent that it should be by the impact of healthy criticism."

Ban on Press and Platform

For the conditions depicted by Sir Albion, Maharaja Hari Singh was not, however, entirely responsible. The policy of suppressing public opinion had been assiduously followed by his predecessors

and wholeheartedly supported by the British Indian Government. Jealous of maintaining the safety of their frontiers, they took active steps to prevent the infiltration into the State of 'seditious' ideas from the rest of the country by preventing the formation of any association, political, social or even religious, and publication of a newspaper in the State.

The attitude of the State government and the Resident to the printing of a paper in the state will be clear from the orders passed in 1906 on a harmless journal entitled *Ladakh Akhbar*. The journal printed at Leh in the Bodhi language and script on a litho press and priced at one pice per copy was published as early as 1903. Edited by Rev. J.E. Peter of the Moravian Mission, the journal whose circulation was confined to 150 copies per issue was distributed in Ladakh, Lahoul, Bushair and as far away as Darjeeling. The journal gave bare news about the activities of the Mission and since no formal sanction for its publication was obtained, it escaped the notice of the Resident and the Darbar. Three years later the Resident came to know of a paper being printed in the State and brought it to the notice of the Maharaja with a strong note as to why the State government was permitting it to be issued without the formal sanction. The Maharaja ordered the Moravian Mission to stop its publication forthwith.

The policy applied to the publication of even cultural or religious magazines. The Judicial Minister while refusing permission to one Anant Ram to publish a magazine of this nature, remarked that in his opinion it was difficult "to disconnect politics from questions which have a bearing on the social, moral or educational condition of a community."[3]

The ban on formation of societies, even social and religious, was extremely rigid. As late as 1921, the Maharaja very reluctantly gave permission to the formation of an association whose object was the teaching of the Quran, and ordered the police "to watch that the anjuman does not take part in political matters."[4]

To further ensure that the people did not have any channel for expressing their grievances and that they had no contact with the rising political wave in the rest of India, the movements of all visitors of a suspicious nature were closely watched and on frivolous grounds they were turned out of the State. This became all the

3. Ibid., File No. 30, Bloc C of 1906.
4. Ibid, File No.: 66/102-C. of 1921.

more pronounced during and after the agitation against Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal in 1905. In 1909 the Resident informed the State government that two agitators from Punjab (Ajit Singh and Sufi Amba Prasad) were about to enter the State and a watch be kept over them. The Maharaja in his zeal replied that keeping of a watch was not necessary; he would not allow them to enter the State.[5] Every Bengali was suspect. A Bengali youth who came to Jammu in 1910 was closely watched and followed by the police although his relative, a professor in a State college gave an undertaking that he would be personally responsible for his actions. The student was forthwith turned out of the State and the Resident applauded the action.[6] Even a sanyasi of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission was ordered out of the State as the Resident and the state authorities thought he looked 'suspicious'.[7]

Earlier Political Demonstrations

But in spite of these precautions and virtual sealing up the State borders against the infiltration of political ideas, there occurred now and then political demonstrations indicating that the awakening in the rest of the country was influencing the minds of the young men in the State too. Jammu, being adjacent to the Punjab, was naturally the first to be affected by this wave. In 1907, the students of the Government School collected subscriptions for the *Punjabee*, a paper of Lahore connected with the student movement. Some of the students shouted "Bande Mataram" in the streets and wrote the slogan on the walls of the school. This came to the knowledge of the Resident and the State authorities expelled four students from the school; two teachers were dismissed from service. In his note of 12 May 1907, Raja Amar Singh took a serious view of the incident. "A movement like this", he wrote, "which has the effect of inoculating the students' mind with germs of mischievous political ideas should be immediately nipped in the bud." He gave instructions to the district magistrates and the police "to keep close watch over all agitations and their promoters," and authorised them "to adopt measures consistent with the situation to prevent and put a stop to seditious and politically dangerous movements."[8]

5. Ibid.. File No.: 12/N-280 1909.
6. Ibid, File No 202/N-5/C. of 1910.
7 Ibid., File No.: 71 of 1909.
8. Ibid., File No.: 24 N-118, of 1907.

But howsoever the authorities might try to keep the people under their heels, the urge for freedom which had seized the educated classes in the State manifested in one way or the other. The two colleges were turning out dozens of graduates and some of them though not taking to politics, openly carried on a campaign in the press outside the State. Several influential Kashmiris whose ancestors had left Kashmir and settled in the rest of India formed associations and issued journals and pamphlets demanding a better deal for the people of the State, particularly the Muslims. By 1919, thanks to the inspiration that the young men of the State got from the Congress movement in India, the middle class population in the State was thoroughly permeated with the ideas of freedom and self-rule.

Inspiration from Gandhiji

The Non-cooperation and Satyagraha movement launched by the Congress under the leader ship of Mahatma Gandhi had its repercussions the State too. In the Prince of Wales (now Gandhi Memorial) College in Jammu the students went on strike following the expulsion of a student from the college by the Principal, an Englishman. Subsequently over 150 students went to Gujranwala to attend a conference of students convened by Lala Lajpat Rai to induce the students to join the Non-cooperation movement. It was, however, on the personal intervention of the Maharaja that the situation did not assume serious proportions as it had at one stage threatened to do.[9]

This incident made the State authorities more vigilant. They now began to turn out of the State all those who had any sympathy with the Non-cooperation or Khilafat movements. A religious preacher from the Punjab who exhorted the audience to be truthful and wear *Khadi* was arrested and later on turned out of the State boundary.

In the Valley there was an apparent calm but occasionally there was a rumbling in the political horizon. Organised demonstrations took place during 1922-23, pressing the government to solve the food problem. And we have already noted the action of some Muslim religious leaders and landlords in presenting a memorial to the Viceroy for the redress of the grievances of the Muslim subjects of His Highness the Maharaja.

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9. Ibid., File No. 63/60-C of 1921.

So when Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the *gaddi* the people of the State had already a background of political agitation and its suppression by the State government. There was now a regular inflow of daily papers in English and vernaculars from the rest of India, and the events there were keenly watched by the people of the State. The congress movement and the working of dyarchy in India were influencing the youth of the State. Most of the students after graduating from the State Colleges, joined various Universities in India for further studies. There they came in contact with students and other political leaders and on their return acted as a leavening among the masses. No wonder when Mahatma Gandhi launched his famous Salt Satyagraha in 1930, the authorities in the State were faced with a situation for which they were not prepared at all.

The news of Gandhiji's arrest spread like wildfire and there was a spontaneous hartal in Jammu, Srinagar and other towns. In Srinagar a huge procession was organised which passed through the main streets of the city. A bonfire of foreign cloth was held in the city's main chowk while the demonstrators shouted anti-British slogans. The authorities looked helplessly on, reflecting perhaps upon their long, sustained but futile efforts to muzzle the people's voice and to suppress popular discontent and urge for freedom.

Meanwhile, several Muslim young men, fresh from the Universities in India, particularly Aligarh, where they had come in contact with Muslim leaders and propagators of pan-Islamism, organised themselves into a group, holding frequent meetings at the Muslim Reading Room in Srinagar. Frustrated at their failure to enter State service direct on responsible and remunerative posts, they came to the conclusion that unless they had the backing of the masses, they had no future in the land of their birth. By and by they organised larger meetings and carried on a whispering but ineffective campaign against what they termed a Hindu State. Their political activities were thus based on purely communal lines, which later on assumed a painful aspect.

They had the tacit support of the British Indian Government as well as the British minister. The Maharaja, ignorant of the feelings and aspirations of the people, did not take any initiative in winning back their goodwill and confidence.

British Support the Communal Movement

This was in fact tragic, because the Maharaja had progressive ideas about freedom and self-rule. He expressed these sentiments at the Round Table Conference held in London at about this time. Speaking on behalf of the Princes, he observed: "As Indians and loyal to the land whence we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest of our countrymen for our land's enjoyment of a position of honour and equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations." These and similar observations convinced the British that Maharaja Hari Singh was not a prince to toe their line. They had already had a bitter taste of his haughty and independent nature when on his accession to the *gaddi* he had withdrawn the many facilities and easements which the Resident used to enjoy at Srinagar.

But more serious than this was his attitude towards the frontier policy. It will be recalled that by the time full powers were restored to Maharaja Pratap Singh, the control of Gilgit had devolved upon the British Political Agent there, without of course the true consent of the Maharaja who was till then powerless. The area of the Gilgit Frontier was divided into two categories of administration — the Gilgit Wazarat or settled area, ruled directly by the Maharaja, and the political Agency under the control of the Political Agent appointed by the British Indian Government. With the accession to the throne of Maharaja Hari Singh in 1925, the question of this anomalous position which had come into existence in Gilgit was raised with the Government of India. A long correspondence ensued, the Maharaja throughout pressing for the abolition of the Agency. Ultimately the Resident sent a Memo to the Darbar putting forth a new proposal by which "the appointment of Political Agent, Gilgit, should be abolished and in his place a Political Officer should be lent to the Kashmir State to hold the appointment of Governor of Gilgit and to conduct political relations on behalf of the Government of India and the Kashmir Government with the Political Districts. The Political Officer would be a lent State servant and not under the orders of the Government of India." But before this proposal could be given a practical shape, internal disorder broke out in the State enabling the Resident to withdraw it at the instance of the Government of India.

Gilgit had always been a tender spot for the British and any questioning of their right to hold it produced a violent reaction from their side.

For, at this time the British desired a fuller and unhindered control of this frontier. Soviet Russia had extended its hold on Tashkent, Khiva and Bokhara. The British intuitively felt that the Communist ideas were potentially much more of a menace to their domination of the Orient than all the Tsar's armies in the past. As early as 1919, the British Indian Government had directed the State government to keep a careful watch for any Bolshevik literature which might find its way over the Central Asian road and be found in circulation in the State. They built airfields and wireless stations at Gilgit and many military missions were sent from there to Central Asia to help restore the overthrown Amirs, Beys and Khans to their seats of power and privilege.

Maharaja Hari Singh's demand to abolish the Agency and hand over to him its control was in fact puerile and he had to bear its consequences in full. He secured respite from trouble only when he gave up the demand for the restoration of Gilgit, and when in 1935 he himself withdrew his administrative machinery from there and handed over even the Gilgit Wazarat on a "60-years lease".

It is not, therefore, difficult to imagine that the British Indian Government, in order to further their interests in Gilgit and to bring the State under their effective control, gave active support to the organisers of mass meetings and encouraged the conduct of the movement on communal lines. The policy was already paying them a good dividend in the rest of India.

With the Muslim masses groaning under several disabilities and passing through a period of severe economic depression; with thousands of Hindu young men educated but unemployed; the administration under an inefficient and unsympathetic bureaucracy, and with the direct encouragement by the British to Muslim agitators, the stage was set for a convulsion early in 1931.

The Upsurge

An extensive and fierce propaganda campaign against the Maharaja's rule was let loose from Lahore and other cities of the Punjab by the Muslim press. Leaflets and journals containing stories of the deliberate suppression of Muslims in the State were distributed in thousands among the people, instigating them to rise against the Maharaja who, it was alleged, was dominated by his Hindu officers. The State government, according to the authors of the propaganda literature, was entirely Hindu and was determined to keep the Muslim

majority in perpetual serfdom. The Anglo-Indian press joined the chorus of denunciation of the Maharaja and his government.

Jammu being nearer to the Punjab was the first to be affected by this propaganda. In December, 1930, the All Kashmir Muslim Conference, founded a few years earlier, held the annual session in Lahore which was attended by some young men from Jammu who, on their return to the State, embarked upon a campaign of agitation against the government. This excited the Muslim residents of Jammu city and adjoining villages. A few unfortunate incidents pertaining to the reading of the *Khutba* by a Maulvi and the disrespect shown to the Holi Quran by a police constable were seized upon by the agitators and the cry "Islam in danger" was raised. In the Valley, the Muslims being staunch followers of the Mir Waiz Ahmad Ullah, the chief preacher of Srinagar refrained, in the absence of his directive, from actively responding to the call of the Muslim Conference of Lahore to rise against the government, The young men who had organised the Reading Room Party and represented the progressive element among Muslims were up against the wall of Maulvi Ahmad Ullah's conservative outlook on politics.

But early in March 1931, the old Mir Waiz died, his funeral being attended by the entire Muslim population of the city. The new Mir Waiz, Yusuf Shah, an enthusiastic young man, was in full sympathy with the aims and objects of the Reading Room Party, having himself, while a student of the Theological College at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, witnessed the freedom struggle of the masses in the rest of India. There was thus no difficulty in calling mammoth public meetings in the various mosques of Srinagar and other muffasil towns, to be addressed by the young members of the Reading Room Party.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

The most conspicuous and impressive among them was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, fresh from the University with a Master of Science degree. Born in 1905, he was brought up by his widowed mother and elder brothers who were engaged in shawl trade. After passing his Intermediate examination from the Sri Pratap College in Srinagar he continued his studies in Lahore and took his degree from the Punjab University. In 1928 he secured admission to the Aligarh Muslim University and passed his M.Sc. Examination in 1930. Returning to Kashmir he succeeded in getting a teacher's post in the Government High School, Srinagar. The Maharaja's government had instituted by

then a Civil Service Recruitment Board for selecting candidates to higher posts on the basis of merit. Again, the Hindus who had by then advanced in education and secured technical qualifications, offered a stiff resistance to the entry of Muslims into State service. Sheikh Abdullah raised his voice against this policy and resigned from his job in protest.

As an active member of the Reading Room Party, Sheikh Abdullah was responsible for organising mammoth meetings of Muslims in various mosques and delivering fiery speeches exposing the hardships and the depressed condition of the people. Communal tension reached the flash point and it needed only a spark to explode.

The spark was supplied by the arrest and trial in Srinagar of one Abdul Qadir an agent provocateur, who had come to Kashmir in the service of a European visitor as cook. On 21 June, 1931, he made a speech at a meeting held in the precincts of the *Khanaqah* of Shah Hamadan. The speech was considered by the government as seditious. He was arrested and his trial in the court of the Sessions Judge greatly excited the Muslim public and huge crowds assembled in and outside the court on the days of hearing. Consequently it was decided to hold the trial in the Srinagar Central Jail. While the court was in session, a crowd of 4,000-5,000 people that had collected outside the jail raised slogans demanding the withdrawal of the case against Qadir, and made a rush at the gate of the jail. Their progress was halted by a posse of police. Angered at this the crowd pelted the police with stones. Meanwhile the prisoners in the jail became restive. Telephone wires were cut. The district magistrate thereupon ordered the armed police to open fire on the crowd. Twenty-one persons died and many more were wounded.

The officials became nervous and lost control over the situation. The crowd carried the dead bodies on *charpoys* and raising banners of blood paraded the main markets of the city. There was a widespread resentment among the Muslims at these killings and having been fed for months past with vicious communal propaganda, their wrath was turned against the Hindus whom they associated with the Maharaja's government. Shops belonging to the Hindus were looted and there was communal outburst in a suburb of Srinagar where three Hindus lost their life.

The Maharaja acted promptly. He sent a company of his bodyguard cavalry to the scene of disturbance. The soldiers arrested

hundreds of people and put them behind the bars. In the evening thousands collected in the Jama Masjid in Srinagar where the dead bodies of the victims of police firing were lying preparatory to their burial next day.

Historically the 13 July 1931 is a landmark in the annals of modern Kashmir. It was on that day that open demonstrations against the despotic rule of the Maharaja took place. True, there had been demonstrations in Kashmir earlier against the Maharajas particularly by the shawl weavers, and often by the peasants. But never before had the entire Muslim population risen as one man against the authorities. It is from that date that the people took upon themselves the task of securing for themselves the right of democratic self-rule.

There was a sharp reaction to the communal aspect of the popular outburst from all shades of opinion among the Muslims after the first wave of anger had sudsided. The traditional amity and goodwill between Hindus and Muslims which had been shaken by this outburst asserted immediately. Soon it was realised that the movement, if it was to succeed at all, needed to be guided into healthy secular channels.

The Maharaja appointed an official committee presided over by the chief justice of the State High Court to conduct an enquiry into 13 July firings, but it was boycotted by the Muslims who questioned its independent nature.

The British Appear on the Scene

The demand for instituting an impartial commission of enquiry received support from the British. The Resident communicated personally to the Maharaja the following secret message from the Viceroy. "Extensive Muhammadan propaganda is being worked on the frontier, at Simla and in India generally. The Viceroy wonders whether it would not be wise for His Highness to ask for independent outside assistance for a Commission of Enquiry or at least for services of a Muhammadan High Court judge to add to the existing committee. The Viceroy fears that findings by the present committee if local Muhammadans refuse to serve on it, would do little to allay agitation."

In his long reply the Maharaja pleaded that it would detract from the prestige of the State High Court if the impression was allowed to grow that an outside Muslim judge would be appointed to the Commission of Enquiry. He assured the Viceroy that the situation would

return to normal soon. On 1 August 1931, the Resident again conveyed to the Maharaja the demand of the Muslims "for an impartial British enquiry." On 2 September, he asked the State to allow a deputation of Muslims from the Punjab to meet the Maharaja. The latter turned it down.

The Maharaja dismissed his British minister and appointed an experienced administrator in his place. The new Prime Minister, Raja Hari Kishen Kaul, realised that without entering into some understanding with the leaders of the agitation, it was not possible to restore normal conditions in the State. Accordingly he invited the representatives of Muslims and a truce was concluded on 26 August according to which the leaders undertook to suspend the agitation and present their grievances to the government. The latter on its part undertook to release all political prisoners and withdraw cases against them.

But this was not to the liking of the members of the All-India Kashmir Committee, as the Kashmir Muslim Conference of Lahore came to be designated now. They apprehended the slipping out of their hands of the control over the agitation. Accordingly, they geared their propaganda machine to denouncing the truce. Sheikh Abdullah was prompted to launch another agitation in violation of the truce agreement and he was arrested along with some of his colleagues.

There was an immediate outburst of popular anger against the administration. Numerous processions paraded the streets of Srinagar, but this time there were no communal incidents. The popular will to maintain communal peace prevailed, even though there were forces working for months to break it.

The Maharaja's government acted with such despatch that the public was taken by surprise. The rule of ordinances was inaugurated. The Notification 19-L, based on the notorious Burma Ordinance of the British Government, came into force. There were wholesale imprisonments, public floggings and shootings, at Anantnag, Shopyan, Baramula and Sopore.

The British Indian Government now appeared on the scene in a commanding role. Three days after the incidents, the Resident delivered a peremptory note to the Maharaja demanding its acceptance within 24 hours. The note mentioned that the Government of India "took a very serious view of the situation and feared widespread outbreaks in the Punjab. There were also apprehensions of Muslims

from india sending *jathas* (bands of volunteers) to the State. The government of India, therefore, suggested that the concessions of the following nature should be announced immediately:

(i) Definite and immediate steps should be taken to remedy the more obvious grievances of Muslim subjects such as cow killing ordinance, the prohibition of *Khutba,* the stoppage of *Azan,* etc.

(ii) A completely unprejudiced British officer deputed by the Government of India should hold a full inquiry into Muhammadan grievances and demands. The Government of India attached the greatest importance to this and advised His Highness to ask for the loan of the services of such officer without delay.

(iii) A European Indian Civil Service officer, be appointed as the Chief Minister, and

(iv) The sooner Sir Daya Kishen Kaul (the brother of Raja Hari Kishen Kaul) left the State the better as his presence was definitely against His Highness' interests

The Maharaja had thus to yield to the pressure from the people below and the Government of India from above. He announced the withdrawal of Ordinance 19-L, amnesty to all political prisoners and promised the institution of an impartial commission to examine the grievances of the people and making suitable recommendations.

The scene now shifted to the Jammu province where unrest was simmering for a considerable time. The Ahrar party of the Punjab which had sympathies with the nationalist movement of the Congress, finding that the Ahmadya party was gaining influence with the Muslim population of the State, organised several demonstrations to show their sympathies with their co-religionists living in the State. They started sending *jathas* (bands of volunteers) into the State territory. Simultaneously, there broke out communal rioting in Mirpur district where the Hindu in general and the moneylending class in particular became the victims of loot and arson. The Kashmir Government was unable to cope with the situation and they approached the government of India with the request to send one company of British troops to Mirpur and two to Jammu district to restore law and order.

There was an immediate response from the Government of India.

The troops entered the State on 3 November and on the 7th the Government of India issued an ordinance prohibiting the sending of *jathas* into the State.

Glancy Commission Recommendations

Meanwhile the Maharaja had asked for the loan of the services of an officer to preside over a Commission to go into the grievances of the people and on 12 November he announced the appointment of the Commission under the chairmanship of Sir B.J. Glancy of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India.

The Commission besides the President had four members, one Hindu and one Muslim from the Kashmir Province. After a few months, the representative of the Jammu Hindus resigned but the Commission continued its work and submitted its report recommending that minimum qualifications for appointment to a Government post should not be pitched unnecessarily high and effective measures should be taken "to prevent the due interests of any community from being neglected". The Commission also recommended the grant of proprietary rights in respect of all land "of which the ownership is retained by the State and the right of occupancy is enjoyed by private persons." It also recommended the abolition of several vexatious taxes and laid great emphasis on the removal of unemployment by promoting industries in the State.

While the Commission was conducting its inquiry, events in the State were moving fast. Roused from long political slumber, the people were clamouring for their basic rights. Each community was voicing its grievances, which to the surprise of all, were fundamentally the same. No wonder the people began seriously to think whether there should not be a united movement to have these basic disabilities removed. Sensing the desire of the masses, the leaders of the Muslims reorientated their approach to the problem.

This received further strength from the withdrawal of British support to the communal agitators, following the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel E.J.D. Colvin of the Foreign and Political Department as the Prime Minister, and of three officers of the Indian Civil Service as the Home, Revenue and Police Ministers of the State. The control of administration thus quietly passed into the hands of the British Indian Government.

The communal discord which was contrary to the long traditions of

Kashmir, but which had marked the first upsurge of political awakening in the beginning of 1931, subsided considerably by the middle of 1932. When, therefore, the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference came into existence that year in October, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, its first president, voiced the feelings of the masses when in his address he declared that "our country's progress is impossible so long as we do not establish amicable relations between the different communities."

But communalism in politics did not vanish overnight. It lingered long enough to give birth to a party of communalists among the Muslims in Jammu and to a lesser extent in the Kashmir Valley. The Jammu leaders of Muslim agitation did not bring themselves round to accepting the nationlistic leanings of leaders from Kashmir, whereas in Kashmir itself the Mir Waiz and his followers openly severed their connection with Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues. These defections were later to produce repercussions on the political situation in a wider field.

In March 1933, the Muslim Conference launched a Civil Disobedience Movement demanding a constitutional Reforms Commission under the Presidentship of B.J. Glancy. The Commission recommended the setting up of a Legislative Assembly elected on a narrow and limited franchise and having only recommendatory powers.

Praja Sabha

The Assembly known as Praja Sabha consisted of 75 members, out of whom only 33 were to be elected by different communities on a franchise which did not cover more than 3 per cent of the population. Village and district headmen, priests and managers of religious property, title holders, pensioned officers, medical practitioners, lawyers, and those who had passed the Middle-school examination or its equivalent could only vote. Women were not given the right to vote as, in the words of the Franchise Committee, "the inclusion of women votes would increase the administrative difficulties of the elections."

The Praja Sabha could ask questions, move resolutions, introduce Bills and discuss the State Budget. The Prime Minister who was appointed by the Maharaja was, however, empowered to return to the Praja Sabha for reconsideration any Bill passed by the Sabha together with any amendments which he might recommend. There

was a further provision to deal with any case in which the Praja Sabha did not fall into line with the wishes of the government. Where the Praja Sabha refused leave to introduce or fail to pass in the form recommended by the Council of Ministers (appointed by the Maharaja) any Bill, His Highness could declare that the proposed legislation was essential for the good government of the State, and on such declaration, the Bill could become an Act.

Among matters excluded from the purview of the Praja Sabha, the important ones were His Highness' privy purse, organisation and control of the State Army and the provisions of the Constitution Act.

The Assembly, however, helped to educate the people in parliamentary practices. The debates, questions and answers, discussion on the budget, introduction and passages of official and non-official Bills, were keenly followed by the people.

In the first elections to the Legislature held in 1934, the Muslim Conference captured 19 out of 21 seats allotted to Muslims.

The Praja Sabha, moreover, provided a place for people representing different communities and interests in the State to sit together and helped one leading political party, the Muslim Conference, to understand their difficulties and the disabilities that they laboured under. To a large extent this was responsible for a reorientation of the political and economic policies of the conference. Need was felt for a broad-based party to fight for the fundamental rights of the people and a democratic government. Similar sentiments were expressed in the local papers started from 1932, when freedom of the press and platform was announced by the Maharaja at the recommendation of the Glancy Commission.

Lease of Gilgit to the British

In the meantime Colonel Colvin and the Resident had succeeded in persuading the Maharaja to give the Gilgit Wazarat on "lease" for 60 years to the British Indian Government and hand over the administration and control of the leased territory to them. On 29 March 1935, the Maharaja and the resident, Colonel L.E. Lang, signed the `lease' document by which the Viceroy and Governor-General of India was authorised to assume the civil and military government of the Wazarat of Gilgit subject to the condition that the territory would continue to be included within the dominion of His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and the rights pertaining to mining

would also be reserved to the Kashmir government. There was no mention in the agreement of the districts under the Political Agency of Gilgit for the simple reason that their civil and military administration was already in the hands of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

Having attained their objective, the British at once relaxed the pressure on the Maharaja. He was given complete freedom to deal with the political agitators in any way he liked. The leaders of various communal and political parties in the State who had till then received support and inspiration from Colonel Colvin's government were thrown away like squeezed lemons. They had already lost the support and goodwill of the Punjabi Muslims who had championed their cause in 1931. The All-India Kashmir Committee of Lahore and Simla which had drawn its inspiration from Anglo-Indian officers and press, and directed the Muslim agitation in the State during 1931, died its natural death in June,1933. Sir Mohammad Iqbal resigned from the membership of the Committee on the ground that it was a coterie of Ahmedyas who were more interested in propagating their religious beliefs among the Muslims of Kashmir than fighting for their political rights. In July, the Committee was reconstituted and Sir Iqbal elected its President. But by that time the Kashmir Muslims as well as Hindus had taken the direction of the freedom movement into their own hands. Sir Iqbal's attempt to keep the communal agitation alive in the State thus proved a failure.

Sheikh Abdullah and his Muslim Conference who were till now banking upon the communal aspect of their agitation under the patronage of the British, were caught in their own net. They could neither arouse the communal passions of Kashmiri Muslims nor could they turn to the Hindu and Sikh communities for help. For till then each and every speech of the Sheikh delivered mostly in mosques was targetted against the Dogras and Hindus in general, and the Maharaja in particular.

Sheikh Abdullah was helped out of this difficult situation by Prem Nath Bazaz, a member of the erstwhile Glancy Commission, who had built up a rapport with Jawaharlal Nehru. Bazaz introduced Sheikh Abdullah to Nehru who was given the impression that he was the sole leader of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State, whereas his leadership was confined only to the Muslims of the Valley.

To gain the goodwill of Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah began to pose as a nationalist and moving in that direction

Field Clear for Growth of National Movement

The Muslim Conference Party observed a Responsible Government Day throughout the State on 8 May 1936. An appeal had been made by its President, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, to the Hindus and Sikhs to participate in the functions held in this connection. The response was most encouraging and a number of meetings were addressed by Hindu, Sikh and Muslim leaders, exhorting the people to forge a common platform and party.

In his Presidential address to the sixth annual session of the Conference on 26 March 1938, Sheikh Abdullah observed: "We must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing our political problems....and we must open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs, who like ourselves believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule."

Early in 1936, Col. Colvin relinquished the post of Prime Minister and the Maharaja appointed Sir N. Gopalaswami Aiyyangar in his place. The latter, a hardened bureaucrat, who had served the British Indian Government for the major part of his life, was at heart a nationalist and he saw to it that the formation of a truly nationalist party gained strength.

National Conference Takes Birth

In the summers of 1938 and 1939, the political atmosphere in Kashmir was changing rapidly. On 28 June 1938, the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference met at Srinagar and passed, after a heated discussion lasting 52 hours, a resolution recommending to the General Council to allow all people to become its members, 'irrespective of their caste, creed or religion'. In August of the same year was issued a 'National Demand' under the signature of 12 leading members of various political parties. The ultimate goal of the people according to this 'Demand' was "to bring about compete change in their social and political outlook and to achieve responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja". Among the signatories were Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, G,M Sadiq, Jia Lal Killam, Shyam Lal Saraf, and Sirdar Budh Singh. Next year the recommendations of the Working Committee were accepted by the General Council and thus the National Conference came into existence.

But the forces of communalism and reaction nurtured so long by interested parties, were not entirely absent from Kashmir. When

the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference, there was opposition from among some of the Muslim Conference workers who continued to keep the old body alive. Though leading a tottering existence, the old Muslim Conference received a new lease of life a few years later at the hands of Mr M.A. Jinnah and his Muslim League.

The first session of the National Conference was held in October 1939 and the Conference passed a resolution embodying what was termed the 'National Demand'. The resolution demanded responsible Government, the essence of which, it pointed out, was a legislature composed entirely of members elected by adult franchise based on a joint electorate, with some seats reserved for the minorities. The legislature must have control over the State budget, except that on military service, on the subjects classed as political and foreign and on the payments of debts and liabilities contracted and incurred by His Highness in Council. This was the minimum demand of the conference, and the resolution continued to represent its official view during the years of war.

The Maharaja's government conceded some more timid reforms in 1939. Seven more seats were thrown open to election which in reality increased the representation of the vested interests. Two members were elected by the Tazimi Sirdars (Chief Landlords) whose number was 27 in all. Two more were to be elected by Jagirdars whose total strength in the State was only 175. Two were to be elected by a constituency of 7000 landholders who paid an annual land-tax of 250 rupees or more, and one was to be elected from a constituency of 700 pensioners.

The "Quit India" movement launched by the Indian National Congress in 1942, which resulted in the arrest of the leaders of the Congress and the consequent turmoil, deeply moved the politically awakened people of the State. On 16 August 1942, the National Conference in their resolution said "the demand of the Congress is based on just reasons. The Working Committee condemns the reign of terror and repression which the Government of India have lunched by declaring the Indian National Congress illegal, by the arrest of leaders, and by shooting down unarmed people."

The National Conference, however, followed the advice of the Congress given to the people of all Princely States, not to actively join the movement. The years of war, of scarcity of foodstuffs and other

essentials of life demanded untiring efforts on the part of the leaders to prevent black-marketing by unscrupulous dealers in these commodities. The National Conference took a large share in the distribution of foodstuffs and fuel through the People's Food Committees, and stood between starvation and the people, rescued them from scarcity and want in spite of bureaucratic interference and inefficiency.

The war years also saw the growing importance of the Maharaja with the British government. He gave unstinted help to, and placed all his resources at the disposal of the Government of India in their prosecution of the war. Consequently he was appointed to the Imperial War Cabinet and in this capacity toured the Allied Front in the Middle East. Any action that he would take against the people's movement received support from the Imperial Government.

"New Kashmir" Plan

But the National Conference did not remain politically inactive. In 1944, it adopted a programme of socialistic pattern of society as its goal. It laid down a plan for "an all-sided advance along all avenues of human activity regulated in a democratic manner on a country-wide scale". The plan covered agriculture, industry, transport, distribution, utility service, currency and finance. The scheme was based on the "democratic principle of responsible government with the elective principle applied from the local Panchayat right up to the Legislative Assembly.

The new ideology gave meaning to the common man's struggle for freedom, and assured his unstinted loyalty to the Conference and its leaders. But before a campaign could be launched for its realisation, Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League appeared on the scene.

The political atmosphere in India had during a decade prior to the end of the Second World War taken a vicious turn. Whereas on the one hand the Indian National Congress under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru was gaining ground against the forces of British Imperialism, the Muslim League led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah was working for the partition of the country on the basis of religion. In 1940, the League passed the Pakistan Resolution demanding the setting up of an independent State for Muslims in India, on the ground that Hindus and Muslims formed two different nations. Whatever common interests and cultural heritage there had been between the Hindus and Muslims were

ignored, even repudiated. Being contrary to the best traditions of the country and the evolution of political consciousness among the people of India, the 'two nation' theory of Mr Jinnah could not be accepted by the national Congress, which from its very inception represented by the nation comprised of different classes, creeds and interests.

In Kashmir where the ruler was a Hindu but the majority of the people Muslims, one might have supposed communal politics would thrive, but the people through centuries of their history had developed a tolerant and peaceful outlook on religious belief. Hatred between one religious community against another was abhorrent to them, and having lived in perfect harmony throughout the course of their chequered history, the Muslim League ideology was foreign to their best traditions and did not, therefore, find favour with them.

Spiritual Sympathy with Indian National Congress

No wonder Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Kashmir in 1940 aroused widespread enthusiasm among the people of all classes. The interest shown in, and sympathy expressed for the struggle of the State's people for freedom by the Congress endeared it to the Kashmiris. Mr Jinnah and the League, on the other hand, scrupulously kept themselves aloof from the State people's struggle.

Jinnah's Disappointment

Mr Jinnah now tried to win the sympathies of the Muslims of Kashmir for his 'two-nation' theory. Some of his workers attempted to resuscitate the old Muslim Conference which a few communal reactionaries had managed to keep alive but which had no popularity and practically no platform. In the spring of 1944, Mr Jinnah went to Kashmir ostensibly 'for rest' and with no professed idea of 'taking part in politics'. He was given a reception by the National Conference who in their address of welcome said: "We Kashmiris today receive you as a prominent Indian despite ideological differences we have with you. We hope that you, along with other leaders of India, will try to arrive at a solution which will go a long way to emancipate the teeming millions of India." To this Mr Jinnah replied, "I am happy to see all classes and groups combined here to receive and honour me. " But scarcely had an hour passed when in reply to another reception given by the resuscitated Muslim Conference, he said, "Muslims have one platform, one *Kalma* and one God. I would request the Muslims to come under the banner of the Muslim Conference and

fight for their rights." In other words, he was advising the Muslims to adopt the same line of politics which they had discarded a decade back. This brought a sharp rejoinder from the National Conference who said "ills of this land can only be remedied by carrying Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs together."

Presently it appeared that Mr Jinnah's 'rest' was not divorced from politics. He presided over the annual session of the Muslim Conference and in his speech attacked the National Conference as a 'band of gangsters'. This was too much for Kashmiris to bear and when a few days later, he wanted to address a public meeting at Baramula, the temper of the people ran so high that he had to be removed to a safer spot for fear that injury might be done to him by the hostile people, a majority of whom were Muslims. The Muslim Conference could win little following and Mir Jinnah had to leave Kashmir disappointed.

By the end of the Second World War, Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference had gained the appreciation of the Congress. In the summer of 1945 a unique session of the National Conference was held at Sopore, 30 miles to the north of Srinagar. The meeting of the Standing Committee of the All-Indian States Peoples' Conference under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru was an important feature of the session. Representatives from many States joined in the deliberations and some important decisions were taken to break the feudalistic structure of Princely States, created and nurtured by the British Government in India. Maulana Azad, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and other leaders of the Congress also attended. Speeches made at the session laid pronounced emphasis on the identity of political and social ideologies of the people of Kashmir with the people living in the rest of India, and fired the youthful imagination of the politically awakened Kashmiris.

While the Second World War was at its highest pitch and the Maharaja enjoyed the fullest powers without any interference from the British Indian Government, N. Gopalaswami Aiyangar relinquished the post of Prime Minister. His exit from the State service marked the end of an orderly but stiff government. The Maharaja then appointed several men to the post in quick succession — Raja Sir Maharaja Singh, Colonel Sir K.N. Haksar, Sir B.N. Rau. None of these gentlemen made any effort to understand the problems of the State or make a contribution to solving them. The people had made rapid advance in political education and demanded a large measure of reform.

And when in the summer of 1945, Sir B.N. Rao handed over the charge of Prime Minister of the State, the Maharaja appointed a Kashmiri, Ram Chandra Kak, to succeed him. Kak entered the State service as the librarian of a local college and with his remarkable aptitude for hard work he ultimately succeeded in getting the post of Minister-in-Waiting of the Maharaja. Sir B.N. Rao's exit gave him the chance of securing the coveted Prime Ministership in a Council of Ministers which included two popular members.

'Quit Kashmir' Movement

While the National Conference was holding its annual session in Srinagar in 1944 in which it adopted the programme of a socialistic pattern of society and democratic government, the Maharaja announced his decision to include in the Cabinet two popular ministers to be chosen from among the elected members of the Praja Sabha. Though meagre in content the reforms were accepted by the National Conference as a step towards future cooperation between the ruler and the ruled and selected a nominee of its own on the Cabinet. But in actual day-to-day working the popular minister had to face administrative non-cooperation, indifference of non-elected ministers and found himself powerless even in the functioning of his own departments. Hence on the 17 March 1946, he resigned. A month later, in May 1946, the National Conference launched its 'Quit Kashmir' movement for the transfer of power to the people.

Bolstered by Nehru and the Congress, Sheikh Abdullah returned to his old tactics in attacking the rule of the Maharaja. Giving it a garb akin to the Quit India movement he launched the 'Quit Kashmir' movement against the Maharaja and his family. Kak took strong measures against the leaders including Sheikh and very soon the movement fizzled out. But before the iron hand of Kak could pounce upon Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed and G.M. Sadiq, they had left the State to direct the movement from the rest of the country, and by their indefatigable efforts they kept the people fully posted with the real aims and objects of the movement.

Nehru's Arrest

On hearing that the people of Kashmir were being made target of pitiless repression, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was at the moment engaged in important talks with the Cabinet Mission, rushed to the aid of the Kashmir people, but was arrested by the authorities after he

had crossed into the State territory. The news of his arrest shook the whole of India, and fearing its repercussions, the Congress leaders called him back to Delhi for consultations. At the time when Jawaharlal Nehru rushed to Kashmir and defied the ban which had been placed on his entry into the State, Mr Jinnah issued a statement in which he described the "Quit Kashmir" movement as "an agitation carried on by a few malcontents who were out to create disordely conditions in the State."

Gandhiji Visits Kashmir

Meanwhile far-reaching developments were taking place in the country. The British Government had announced the transfer of complete power to Indians. The partition of India was in the offing. The people of Kashmir locked in a mighty struggle with the forces of feudalism, could not give thought to these vital questions. In such hard times when tempers were rising high in the rest of India, Gandhiji found time to visit Kashmir in July 1947. His visit proved comforting to the harassed people. He was impressed with the communal harmony that prevailed in the State and said that in an India which had become dark all around, Kashmir was the only hope. Speaking at Wah (Pakistan) on his return in August 1947, he said in a prayer meeting that in the large gatherings that he saw, "it was very difficult for me to know whether it was predominantly Muslim or Hindu."

Mahatma Gandhi's visit was still being talked of in the homes and streets of Srinagar when news came that the Maharaja had dismissed Ram Chandra Kak and appointed a former Revenue Minister, General Janak Singh, in his place. They now looked up for a clear lead from the National Conference with regard to the most important question — accession of the State to India or to Pakistan.

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INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

While the people of Kashmir under the leadership of the National Conference were engaged in a bitter fight with feudalism and bureaucracy as represented by the Maharaja's government, events of a vital and far-reaching consequence were taking place in the rest of the country. British Imperialism was crumbling fast before the massive blows of Indian national movement and the day of India's independence was drawing near. By 1947 the British were convinced that India could no longer be held in thraldom and acting on the advice of the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, the British Government published a Plan for the partition of India. On 17 June, the Indian Independence Act was passed stating that on 15 August 1947, the British would relinquish their authority in India which was to become an independent country. A part of its territories with a preponderating Muslim majority was to be constituted into Pakistan and recognised as an independent and sovereign State.

The Partition

The partition was necessitated by the sinister passions aroused by intractable and interested parties among a section of communal-minded Muslims during the long struggle for emancipation of India from foreign domination. The freedom movement was aimed at not merely freeing India from British domination but also building a secular, independent and democratic India. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis — all made sacrifices for this great cause. Against it stood many sectarian, pseudo-religious, feudal and other vested interests. The Muslim League represented one of these. It set itself against the mainstream of Indian nationalism, endeavouring to sow disruption and discord by perverting religious beliefs to incite hatred. The

League provided a counterpoise to the growing national movement and when at the end of the Second World War it became clear that the British could no longer rule India and that the Indian national movement was on the eve of its final victory, the League intensified its activities and caused tremendous strife. It was in this context that India was partitioned between composite Indian nationalism on the one hand, and reactionary political sectarianism, on the other. India accepted the partition as it provided the only peaceful means of attaining freedom.

The partition applied only to what was known as British India. Besides the fear that Pakistan which touched the borders of the State and might create difficulties in maintaining communications with the outside world, the Kashmiris were faced with a graver problem, namely, the future of the Jammu and Kashmir State itself. On the lapse of Paramountcy of the British Crown over all the princely States, of which there were 562 when India attained independence, the problem arose as to what was to be done with them because they were not directly ruled by the Government of India.

Paramountcy of British Crown Lapses

The question of their future was defined in a memorandum (dated 12 May 1946) on 'States Treaties and Paramountcy' presented by the Cabinet Mission to the Chancellor of Princes in India.

> "When a new fully self-governing or independent Government or Governments come into being in British India, His Majesty's government's influence with these Governments will not be such as to enable them to carry out the obligations of paramountcy. Moreover, they cannot contemplate that British troops would be retained in India for this purpose. Thus, as a logical sequence and in view of the desires expressed to them on behalf of the Indian States, His Majesty's government will cease to exercise the power of paramountcy. This means that the rights of the States which flow from their relationship to the Crown will no longer exist and that all the rights surrendered by the States to the paramount power will return to the States. Politically arrangements between the States, on the one side, and British India on the other, will thus be brought to an end. The void will have to be filled either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India, or failing this, entering into particular arrangements with it."

To this effect the British Government made an announcement simultaneously with the announcement of the partition scheme on 3 June 1947: "His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that the decisions announced above (about partition) relate only to British India and that their policy towards the Indian States contained in the Cabinet Mission Memorandum of May 12, 1946, remains quite unchanged."

The legal provision under which the Princely States could enter into a "federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India" was to be found in the Indian Independence Act of 1947 and the Indian Act of 1935. These two Acts of the British Parliament, which created the legal basis for the independence of India, provided that a State could accede to the Dominion of India by an Instrument of Accession executed by the ruler thereof. It was also provided that Indian States acceding in this manner shall become an integral part of the Union of India. This legal position was affirmed on several occasions by the late Mr Mohammad Ali Jinah who was the architect of Pakistan and its Governor-General.

But to prevent a dislocation of the arrangements "with regard to customs, transit and communications, posts and telegraphs, or other like matters",during the period between 17 June, when the Government of India Act was passed, and 15 August, when India became independent, the ruler of a Princely State could enter into a standstill agreement with either or both the independent Dominions.

In the absence of accession, however, the Union of India was responsible for the defence and protection of Indian States, since it had succeeded to the British Crown in the same way as the British Crown had succeeded the Mughal Emperor. The United Nations recognised the Union of India as the successor State to the pre-independence Government of India by allowing it to continue its original membership, while admitting Pakistan, on her application, as a new member State.

This was the legal and constitutional position in which the Jammu and Kashmir State stood on the eve of independence. But there were several practical difficulties which made the question of accession of the State to any one of the Dominions complicated. The foremost was the attitude of the Ruler, Mahăraja Hari Singh, himself.

Maharaja's Indecision

For years after the lease of Gilgit to the British, the Maharaja was given wide latitude by the Government of India in the exercise of his powers. With his unstinted support to their war effort his position became all the more strong, and when there arose an extensive movement among the masses to end the British rule in India, the Maharaja's hands were further strengthened by the British to enable him to kill opposition to his rule in the State. This explains the strong measures that his Prime Minister, Ram Chandra Kak, took to suppress the 'Quit Kashmir' movement launched by the National Conference.

All these years the Maharaja was dreaming of an independent Kashmir State protected and aided by the British Crown. He, as many of his class, could not visualise the exit of the British from India and the end of the all-powerful British Empire. Encouraged in his ideas by several of his British officials in whom he appears to have placed trust, he refused to see and understand the dynamic changes that were taking place in the political scene in India. He cherished the dream of his State standing "independent, of course with friendly and cordial relations with both the Dominions." An additional factor was that he did not wish to accede to India where the ruling Congress Party under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru was out to support Sheikh Abdullah, the arch opponent to his rule.

Though all the States acceded to India or Pakistan on various dates before or immediately after 15 August 1947, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir delayed his decision in regard to accession. He had clamped the popular leaders and a large number of their followers behind prison bars and had shut his eyes to the historic forces that were shaping the destinies of the one-fifth of the world's population. He little thought that these very forces were to determine the future of himself and that of his State too.

To apprise him of the grave risk he was taking by his indecision, Lord Mountbatten visited Kashmir on 19 June 1947, and remained there for four days. "When he got there," records Campbell-Johnson, "he found the Maharaja politically very elusive and the only conversations that took place were during their various car drives together. Mountbatten on these occasions urged him and his Prime Minister, Pandit Kak, not to make any declaration of independence, but to find out in one way or another the will of the people of Kashmir as soon as possible and to announce their intention by 14th of August, to send representatives accordingly to one Constituent Assembly or

the other." "On every one of those four days," said Lord Mountbatten in a speech shortly after his return from his historic mission to India, "I persisted with the same advice: 'Ascertain the will of your people by any means and join whichever Dominion your people wish to join by August 14, this year.' He did not do that , and what happened can be seen. Had he acceded to Pakistan before August 14, the future government of India had allowed me to give His Highness an assurance that no objection whatever would be raised by them. Had His Highnes acceded to India by August 14, Pakistan did not then exist, and therefore could not have interfered. The only trouble that could have been raised was by nonaccession to either side, and this was unfortunately the very course followed by the Maharaja."[1]

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed persuaded Mahatma Gandhi to pay a short visit to Srinagar in early August. He saw the Maharaja, but from his later speeches it appears was not successful in convincing him of the desirability of meeting the demand of the people for a constitutional government.

Standstill Agreement

The sands were running out fast, and fearing a breakdown of the communication system through Pakistan and the rich export trade with India, the Maharaja sought from both the Dominions a standstill agreement to come into effect on 15 August 1947.

The history of the standstill agreement is contained in the telegrams exchanged between the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, on the one hand, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, on the other. There was a similar series of telegrams between the responsible Minister in New Delhi and the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

As a result of the telegrams that passed between the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Kashmir, standstill agreement was arrived at "with regard to her (State's) communications, supplies and post office and telegraphic arrangements"[2]

On the same date (12 August 1947) an identical telegram was sent to the government of India stating that the "Jammu and Kashmir Government would welcome standstill agreements with the Union of India on all matters on which these exist at the present moment

1. *Time Only to Look Forward*, pp. 268-69.
2. Sir Zaffarullah Khan, Security Council Official Records, 229th meeting, p. 101.

with outgoing British Indian government. It is suggested that the existing arrangements should continue pending settlement of details and formal execution of fresh agreements." These arrangements according to the Treaty of Amritsar of 1846, comprised the use of Indian forces if there was internal rebellion or invasion by a foreign government.

The Government of India, however, did not accept the offer immediately and telegraphed back :

"Government of India would be glad if you or some other Minister duly authorised in this behalf could fly Delhi for negotiating standstill agreement between Kashmir Government and Indian Dominion. Early action desirable to maintain existing agreements and administrative arrangements."

But before the Prime Minister could go to Delhi to discuss these matters, Kashmir was invaded. Therefore, the standstill agreements which the State was trying simultaneously to conclude with the two countries were interrupted and other developments followed.

Frontier Raids and Economic Blockade

It was early in 1947 when serious communal riots and disturbances became the order of the day in the Punjab, and there were large-scale movements of refugees from one part of the province to the other, that the Maharaja had stationed his troops at several strategic points on the borders of the State. A British officer, Major General Scott, who was in overall command of the troops deployed them in small batches all over the frontier with the result that no reserves were available for meeting a large-scale invasion from across the border. However, only a few days after Pakistan accepted the standstill agreement, Major General Scott submitted his first report to the Jammu and Kashmir Government on the border raids from Pakistan. On 4 September, on the basis of his reports, the Kashmir Government protested by telegram to the West Punjab Government against armed Muslims from Rawalpindi district, infiltrating into the State. Two days later there was a marked increase in this activity. Major General Scott reported more armed raids into State territory by Pakistan nationals and soldiers on 13, 17, 18 and 28 September. On 3 October, Kashmir government protested to Pakistan against hundreds of armed people from Murree Hills in Pakistan operating in Poonch. Further incursions into Kashmir took place on various dates during October.

In contrast to Lord Mountbatten's assurance to the Maharaja that India would not object if he decided on his State acceding to Pakistan in accordance with the established procedure, Pakistan was determined to coerce the State into accession to her, despite a Standstill Agreement which she had with the Ruler. Besides the several incursions by her armed forces and nationals into the State territory, she began an economic blockade of the State. Supplies of food, petrol and other essential commodities to Kashmir were cut off. Communications were tampered with and free transit of people was hindered.

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir made repeated representations to the authorities in Pakistan appealing to them to lift the blockade and stop violation of State territory. These representations brought forth only brazen denials. On 15 October, the Maharaja cabled to the British Prime Minister, whom he thought still to be the overall protector of Indian States, about the economic blockade of the State by Pakistan and the beginning of the invasion from Pakistan in Poonch. He went on to say :

> "People all along the border have been licensed and armed with modern weapons under the pretext of general policy which does not appear to have been followed in the case of internal districts of West Punjab. Whereas military escorts are made available for several other purposes, none is provided for safe transit of petrol and other essentials of life. Protests merely elicit promises which are never implemented. As a result of obvious connivance of the Pakistan Government, the whole of the border from Gurdaspur side up to Gilgit is threatened with invasion which has actually begun in Poonch."

It was on the same day (15 October) that there began the siege of Fort Owen; nearly 5,000 Pakistani raiders were involved in these operations.

Pressed on all sides by the hostile actions of Pakistan and realising that the British Crown was powerless to help, the Maharaja tried to win back the support and goodwill of his subjects. He had early in August dismissed Kak and appointed temporarily a retired minister, Thakur Janak Singh, in his place. Two months later he appointed Mehar Chand Mahajan, a prominent jurist of Punjab, as his Prime Minister. To reestablish peaceful relations between the ruler and his subjects, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and most of his colleagues were released from jail on 29 September.

On their release, the leaders of the National Conference found Kashmir faced with the important question of whether she should accede to the Indian Union or to Pakistan, or remain independent. But there was another more crucial question which also awaited recognition and solution, namely the freedom of the people. So they thought and said that this important question could be decided by the people of Kashmir only when they were free. They requested Pakistan not to precipitate a decision upon them, but give them time, and support the freedom movement of Kashmir. One of the Leaders, G. M. Sadiq, went twice to Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, with the same request. The reply came in the form of the economic blockade and incursions of their armed forces into the State territory. By 22 October, infiltrations and raids were transformed into a full-scale military invasion of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Invasion

Between the settled districts of the North-Western Frontier of Pakistan and the Afghan border lies that strip of hilly land that is known as the tribal territory whose area is 24,986 square miles and whose population is estimated at 2,378,000.

The people inhabiting this tribal area were a constant source of anxiety to the British Government. Sturdy, warlike and quick to pick quarrels, they are extremely poor and backward in education. It was the constant practice of these people to raid Indian villages within the British jurisdiction for loot. They kidnapped men, women and children for ransom. The British government tried to stop their depredations and purchase peace by paying them a huge amount of 'hush money' every year. Even so, it was neither easy nor possible always to have peace on the frontier. Indeed, the British government had sometimes to resort to aerial bombing to keep them down.

When the British transferred power, one of the problems left unsolved by them was that of the tribal people, and Pakistan had to tackle it. Crores of rupees were spent by the British out of Indian revenues to appease these people, but the newly-born State of Pakistan could ill afford to spend much money on them. Besides, the leaders of Pakistan who upheld religion to be the basis of nationality would lose face if they treated the tribal people, their coreligionists, in the British way. There was again another menace, growing rapidly in the North-western Province, of the Pathanistan movement which demanded autonomy for the Pathans. It had to be nipped in the bud

before the movement lured the Pathans both of the North-western Frontier Province and the tribal areas into one hostile camp. The urgent need felt by Pakistan to force the issue in Kashmir, and secure its speedy accession to Pakistan contained a possibility of solution of more than one problem. To hold out to the poor tribal people the alluring promise of land and plenty in Kashmir, to give them a lurid description of the supposed atrocities perpetrated on Muslims so that they might be worked up to fever pitch, and allow them a free run of the beautiful Valley, would secure Kashmir, solve the problem of the poor tribal people, kill the Pathanistan movement and secure Pakistan's safety and prosperity — all in one stroke ! What was needed was expedition and promptitude.

So the tribal people were let loose on Kashmir territory. They had to march through miles of Pakistan territory to reach the borders of the Jammu and Kashmir State. We have already noted the intense activities of hostiles all along the 500-mile Pakistan border and their 'softening' process set into operation. The raids, small and big, had tested, baited, decoyed and dispersed the force guarding the security of the State. These raids grew into a regular warfare. On 22 October 1947, a large force of armed raiders entered Muzaffarabad in 300 lorries and began looting and burning. They were armed with modern weapons, including brenguns, stenguns, grenades, heavy mortars, anti-tank rifles and land-mines and an unlimited supply of ammunition. They were led by Major-General Akbar Khan, under the name of General Tariq and other Pakistan officers fully conversant with modern strategy and warfare.

After the sack of Muzaffarabad the invaders continued their progress along the Jhelum Valley road towards Srinagar, bringing death and devastation to the inhabitants of villages and towns on the way. Their triumphant march was temporarily stemmed at Uri, a town 65 miles from Srinagar by the demolition of a bridge and the gallant resistance of about 150 men under the command of Brigadier Rajinder Singh of the State army, who was killed fighting a memorable last-ditch battle.

Brigadier Rajinder Singh

The heroic exploit of Brigadier Rajinder Singh and his ill assorted band of a few regular soldiers, cooks, mess waiters and orderlies who had taken up arms on his orders, is unique in the military annals of the world. Born in the family of Jamwal Rajputs on 14 June 1899, he

lost his parents at the age of four and was brought up by his uncle. He graduated from the P. W. College in Jammu and at the age of 22 was directly commissioned as Lieutenant in the State forces. He rose in rank quickly and by his abilities as a disciplined soldier and an able commander became chief of Staff of the State forces on 14 August 1947.

On the fateful day of 22 October , he was attending to his official files at the Srinagar Cantonment when the news reached that a large scale invasion had taken place at Muzaffarabad and that the raiders were on their way to Srinagar. There were no reserves near at hand, and collecting all the available soldiers and non-combatants, he could with difficulty muster a small force of about 150 men. But the city had to be saved and the only way to do it was to stem the hostile advance on the road below Baramula. Brigadier Rajinder Singh decided to march at the head of the small column towards Domel, 112 miles from Srinagar.

But Domel fell and the enemy forces advanced and dug themselves in strategic positions at Garhi, 16 miles further up. They offered stiff resistance to the small column led by Rajinder Singh. Despite suffering heavy losses he grimly held on for some time and when the raiders tried to encircle his troops, he decided to pull out and withdraw to Baramula.

This withdrawal raised the morale of the enemy who advanced as far up as Uri. After reorganising his battered column at Baramula the Brigadier dashed to Uri. Facing the main body of the raiders there, he employed a different strategy, namely, to halt as long as possible the advance of the invaders to Srinagar. He destroyed the bridge which cut off the forward line of the raiders from the base. Attacked from three directions the Brigadier suffered heavy losses and withdrew his column to Mohora and then to Rampur along the Jhelum Valley road, with the raiders in chase. Here he offered a grim fight to the enemy for 11 crucial hours. But he had to pay a heavy toll and finally ordered the remnant of his men to withdraw. While they were fighting their way to a position of safety, Rajinder Singh guarding the rear single-handed, kept up a steady fire. It was here that an enemy bullet hit him in the right arm and another got embedded in the right leg. But this did not silence his gun. He was soon encircled by the raiders and killed.

But he had saved Srinagar by checking the advance of the enemy

for three invaluable days. This interval had enabled the airfield in the capital to receive the first wave of defenders from India.

With no opposition now from the State forces, the raiders surged forward. Having meanwhile managed to construct a diversion, about a mile long, which must have required considerable engineering skill to build and was apparently effected by the sappers and engineers of the Pakistan army, they captured Mohora and damaging the power-house there, plunged the city in darkness. It took them only a few hours to envelop and enter Baramula, the chief town in the Valley, which they captured on 26 October.

The Sack of Baramula

It was a calamity for the peaceful inhabitants of Baramula. Hundreds were cut down in cold blood. Houses were burnt and looted. No distinction was made between Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian. The entire Mission building of St. Joseph's Convent was ransacked and then burnt to the ground. The chapel was strewn with smashed glass and plaster. The Assistant Mother Superior, three nuns and a British officer's wife were killed. According to the correspondent of the *New York Times* who visited the town after the raiders were driven out by the Indian Army, the "surviving residents estimate that 3,000 of their fellow townsmen, including four Europeans and a retired British Army officer and his pregnant wife were slain."

There in Baramula they seized the young hero of the National Conference, Maqbool Sherwani, 'interrogated' him for several days and at last tied him to a post in the centre of the town, drove nails into him and when he did not even then recant his belief in secular democracy, emptied their bullets into his body. For several days earlier when the tribesmen were terrorising the countryside, "Sherwani, who knew every path in the Valley, began working behind the line, keeping up the morale of the besieged villagers, urging them to resist and to stick together regardless of whether they were Hindus, Sikhs, or Muslims, assuring them that help from the Indian Army and people's militia was on the way. Three times by skilfully planted rumours he decoyed bands of tribesmen' and got them surrounded and captured by the Indian infantry. But the fourth time he was captured himself."

With the occupation of Baramula by the raiders, Srinagar itself was threatened. They, however, lost four valuable days in looting and

killing in Baramula and when they after all marched on Srinagar, they met with resistance from the local militia and the Indian Army which ultimately proved to be their doom.

National Militia

For, at that critical hour in the history of Kashmir when the marauding invaders were a few miles from the capital, the National Conference took up the task of defending the city and surrounding districts against invasion. Thousands of volunteers from all communities came forward to offer resistance to the invader and under the inspiring leadership of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed a sizeable force was hurriedly trained in rifle shooting including a company of women volunteers. A night-long vigil was kept for any tribesmen entering the city by stealth or any fifth columnist creating panic. All available civil motor transport was requisitioned and kept ready for the Indian Army who were expected to come to the aid of Kashmiris in their hour of peril and misfortune.

Accession of the State to India

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah flew to New Delhi to personally appeal to the Indian Cabinet to despatch armed forces to help Kashmiris repel the invaders. Meanwhile the Maharaja alarmed by the invasion of his State and by the prospect of devastation which seemed imminent appealed to India on 24 October, for military help.

On 25 October, a meeting of the Defence Committee took place in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Lord Mountbatten in which the Maharaja's request for supply of arms and ammunition was considered. At this meeting General Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief in India, read out a telegram from the headquarters of the Pakistan Army stating that some 5,000 tribesmen had attacked and captured Muzaffarabad and Domel and that considerable tribal reinforcements could be expected. Reports showed that they were already little more than 35 miles from Srinagar. According to Campbell-Johnson, "the Defence Committee considered that the most immediate necessity was to rush in arms and ammunition already requested by the Kashmir government, which would enable the local population in Srinagar to put up some defence against the raiders. The problem of troop reinforcements was considered, and Mountbatten urged that it would be dangerous to send in any troops unless Kashmir had

first offered to accede."[3]

Following the session of the Defence Committee, V.P. Menon, Secretary of the States Ministry, was sent to Srinagar to explain the position to the Maharaja and to get an eyewitness report of the situation in Srinagar. "The information which V.P. [Menon] brought back to the Defence Committee the next day [October 26] was certainly disturbing. He reported that he had found the Maharaja unnerved by the rush of events and the sense of his lone helplessness. Impressed at last by the urgency of the situation, he had felt that unless India could help immediately, all would be lost. Later in the day, on the strong advice of V.P., the Maharaja left Srinagar with his wife and son. V.P. had impressed upon him that as the raiders had already reached Baramula it would be foolhardy for His Highness to stay on in the capital."[4]

The Defence Committee thereupon "decided to prepare to send troops by air the following day and to accept the accession if it was offered. On the same day Mr. Menon flew back to Srinagar, this time returning with both the signed accession and the request for troops, in addition to the arms and ammunition which were due."[5]

But irrespective of Kashmir's accession it was the duty of India to come to its aid in the hour of its peril. India was the successor State to the former British Government which was responsible for the protection

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3. *Mission with Mountbatten*, p.224.
4. Ibid.
5. Lord Birdwood, *Two Nations and Kashmir*, p. 58.

of all the Indian States from foreign aggression.[6]

The accession of the Jammu and Kashmir State to the Union of India was accepted by the Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, in precisely the same way as in the case of other Indian States. The accession was thus complete in law and in fact, Jammu and Kashmir State thenceforth became an integral part of India and its defence the concern of the whole country. Lord Mountbatten, however, wrote a separate letter to the Maharaja conveying his government's decision "to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India." To remove any apprehensions that the people of Kashmir may have with regard to accession the Governor-General conveyed the assurance that in consistence with the policy of the government of India "that in the case of any State where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State, it is my government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored and the soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people." It was a promise to the people of Kashmir which the Government of India fulfilled later with the holding of elections on universal adult franchise to the Constituent Assembly of the State which approved the State having acceded to India on 26 October 1947.

6. Pandit Nehru elaborating this concept of India's status *vis-a-vis* the Indian States stated in his speech in Parliament on 7 August 1952 :

"By the removal of the British power from India in 1947, we were, to some extent, thrown back to the days when the British first came. That is an interesting and good parallel to pursue in other ways, too ; but I shall not pursue it, because it may lead to controversial matters. When the British power established itself in India, it became evident that no other power in India could remain independent. Of course, these powers could remain semi-independent or as protectorates or in some other subordinate capacity. Accordingly, the Princely States were gradually brought under the domain and suzerainty of the British power. Similarly when the British left India, it was just as impossible for odd bits of Indian territory to remain independent as it had been during their regime. At the time Pakistan was, of course, out of the picture. For the rest, it was inevitable that the Princes and others, whoever they might be and whether they wanted it or not, must acknowledge the suzerainty, the sovereign domain of the Republic of India. Therefore, the fact that Kashmir did not immediately decide whether to accede to Pakistan or to India did not make Kashmir independent for the intervening period. Since she was not independent, it was our responsibility as the continuing entity to see that Kashmir's interests were protected."

Fight Against Aggression

On 27 October, the first batch of Indian troops under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel D. R. Rai flew to Srinagar.[7] They flew because that was the only medium of transport left to them, at such a short notice. By land, they would have been too late. Some 300 miles of precarious fair-weather road lay between the nearest Indian cantonment at Pathankot and Srinagar.

Over a hundred civilian aircraft were immediately mobilised to fly troops, equipment and supplies to Srinagar. Indian Air Force and civilian pilots and ground-crews rose to the occasion and worked day and night to make the airlift a success. The ferry service to Srinagar continued unabated up to 17 November, during which time 704 sorties were flown from Delhi.

Seldom in the history of warfare has an operation been put through with no previous planning and with many handicaps, not the least of which were almost non-existent lines of communication and a complete lack of intelligence of enemy dispositions.

When the first troops were flown for Srinagar, they were instructed to circle over the airfield before landing. They were not sure whether the airfield had not fallen into the hands of the enemy. As a matter of fact, the instructions of Colonel Rai were not to land if there was any doubt on the point, but to fly back to Jammu. After an interval of tense suspense, at 10-30 am a wireless flash from Srinagar announced the safe landing of the first wave of troops.

There was widespread jubilation among the citizens of Srinagar and the inhabitants of neighbouring towns and villages. For five anxious days they had carried on with normal life, kept the essential services going, and maintained a strict discipline. Their morale was high; they did not give way to panic, and they organised bands of volunteers to maintain law and order and keep a strict watch on strategic points. For five days they faced manfully the alarming reports of the raiders' advance and their eyes were constantly cast to the skies in the hope of seeing the first Indian plane coming with the sorely needed help and relief. They had collected all available motor-vehicles and kept them ready to carry the first troops to the front. Local drivers were at the wheels ready to risk their lives in defending their land.

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7. Information on this section has been culled from *Defending Kashmir*, Publications Division, Government of India.

The dispatch of troops to Srinagar was the responsibility of the Delhi-East Punjab Command (now called Western Command), which had originally been formed as an operational command to coordinate the numerous internal defence duties in which the Army in Delhi and East Punjab was involved following the partition. Most units had got somewhat disorganised following the partition of the Army and the withdrawal of the British element.

Instructions to send a battalion to Srinagar were received by the Command headquarters at 1 pm on 26 October. One battalion of the Sikh Regiment, under Colonel Rai, which was then employed on internal defence duties at Gurgaon, was ordered to concentrate at Palam airfield.

By midnight on 26-27 October, the Commanding Officer of First Sikhs managed to assemble his battalion headquarters plus one company at Palam. Clothing, rations and ammunition were issued to the troops at the airfield, and by first light on 27 October, the Sikhs were airborne.

Later in the day, one more company employed on railway protection duties arrived at Palam. The remainder of First Sikhs was still out on detachment duties and had to be brought to Delhi to be flown to Srinagar the following day.

Colonel Rai's Heroic Dash

On 27 October, when the first wave of Indian troops under Colonel Rai landed in Srinagar, the invaders were already in Baramula. Thirty-five miles of fine tarmac road was all that lay between them and Srinagar.

Colonel Rai's orders were to defend the airfield and consolidate his position. On landing, however, he found himself faced with a dilemma. He had to take a quick decision — the enemy was at Baramula, the strategic bottleneck which opens into the Srinagar valley. Once the invaders were allowed to enter and fan out into the Srinagar plains, the game was up.

Should he give immediate battle to the invaders — estimated at anything between 3,000 to 5,000 — at Baramula,with his woefully inadequate force or wait till reinforcements arrived ? Colonel Rai took the decision and crashed into the invaders' column at Baramula.

The civilian buses rushed his troops to within two miles of the town. Holding one company in reserve, he put in an attack with another company. He found, however, that it was not an ill-organised

rabble that he had to contend with but an organised body of men armed with light and medium machineguns and mortars, divided into units and sub-units, and led by commanders who knew modern tactics and the use of ground.

Colonel Rai's company was deployed on a hill along the main road. Sometime after battle had been joined, Colonel Rai discovered that large parties of raiders were working their way around his flanks and that machine-gun fire was coming from the flanks as well as from the front.

There was a serious threat of both his companies being encircled and annihilated. Thereupon, Colonel Rai decided to withdraw to Pattan, half way between Baramula and Srinagar. He got his reserve company away in buses and gradually began to pull out his leading company which was at that time committed. He himself remained with the forward section to make sure that all his troops moved back safely.

The last party of Indian troops had to run the gauntlet of heavy fire in order to escape the trap. Many fell dead, among them was Colonel Rai himself — the victim of a sniper's bullet. But he had succeeded in his object — he had staggered the enemy, disorganised his column and halted his advance long enough for reinforcements to arrive from India. By his courage and dash vital progress in the saving of Srinagar was achieved.

The troops, however, left without a commanding officer, fell back to a point only 3$\frac{1}{2}$miles from Srinagar. But the same night they went forward again, reoccupied Pattan and went even further to the 26th milestone from Srinagar. There they found the raiders swarming around the countryside. They then fell back on Pattan, where they occupied a ridge and dug in.

Meanwhile, a brigade headquarters and a flight of IAF spitfire Tempest, and Harvard aircraft for closer cooperation and air reconnaissance were flown from Delhi. The 161 Brigade arrived in Srinagar close on the heels of the First Sikh Regiment. Brigadier L.P. Sen, who won his DSO in the famous battle of Kangaw in the Arakan during the last world war, arrived in Srinagar and took over command of all Indian and State Forces in the Srinagar valley.

The situation in the first week of operations in Kashmir can best be described as 'touch and go'. The threat to Srinagar continued, even increased. For the Indian Army, the week was one of desperate

struggle to gain time for adequate troops to be flown in from India. That struggle took the shape of offensive delaying actions.

Scanty intelligence reports of the raiders' movements indicated that there were at least four columns of raiders converging on Srinagar and the airfield, one column moving from the west from Baramula, another from the south-west, a third from the north-west and fourth from the north.

On 3 November, a company of the First Kumaon Regiment, which in the meantime had been flown in under Major Somnath Sharma, went out on a fighting patrol to Badgam, nine miles southwest of Srinagar and hardly half a mile from the airfield.

The company ran into an enemy force, 500 to 700 strong, who attacked supported by 3 inch and 2 inch mortars. The encounter lasted over four hours. Maj Sharma led his men with remarkable skill and inflicted many casualties on the enemy. Brigadier Sen, realising that the Kumaonis were faced with a body of well-armed raiders infinitely superior in numbers immediately dispatched reinforcements. But before they could reach the Kumaonis, Major Sharma was killed when a two-inch mortar bomb exploded near him.

When it was noticed that the raiders could bypass our position at Pattan, 17 miles outside Srinagar, and infiltrate into the city itself, Brigadier Sen decided to pull back his troops to a point $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles due west of Srinagar city. In doing so, he strengthened the defence of the city as well as shortened the line of communication of his troops.

Since the withdrawal from Pattan almost coincided with the Badgam engagement, the raiders got away with the impression that the Indian Army was in full retreat. They thereupon concentrated their main body astride the Baramula road and faced our forces entrenched outside the city.

The Battle of Shalteng

Thus, while the enemy was preparing for a final assault on the city, the Indian forces were fast building up for an offensive. Major-General Kalwant Singh arrived in Srinagar on 5 November, and took over command of all the forces in Jammu and Kashmir. At the same time, one squadron of armoured cars adventured their way to Srinagar by the perilous 300-mile Banihal Pass and over ricketty bridges fit only for light tourist traffic. In Srinagar, large crowds lined the route and loudly cheered the cavalcade as it rumbled past.

The raiders' main position had been spotted and the stage was set for the projected offensive. On the morning of 7 November, the Indian troops attacked the enemy. At the same time one troop of armoured cars and a detachment of infantry which were patrolling in the Gandarbal area were ordered to manoeuvre back so as to take on the enemy from the rear. Brigadier Sen sent one force of armoured cars and troops north of the Anchar Lake to go behind the raiders' positions which were hinged on a village called Shalteng. He dispatched another column supported by armoured cars straight down the Baramula road and a battalion of infantry to attack the raiders' right flank. IAF fighters gave close support from the air.

The battle of Shalteng lasted 12 hours. Trapped from three sides, surprised by armoured cars and pursued from the air by the IAF, the raiders fled westwards in disorder, leaving behind 300 dead. The IAF, in this crucial engagement and during the follow-up, played a decisive role.

Baramula Recaptured

With this battle the Indian Army turned the corner. It was a decisive victory, which broke the back of the enemy drive, demoralised the invaders and enabled the Indians to go over to the offensive. It removed the threat to Srinagar once and for all.

Indian forces took up the pursuit and arrived in Pattan the same evening. The next day, 8 November, they made for Baramula and after some skirmishes on the road, entered the town in the afternoon.

To their great disappointment, however, they found that the slight delay in their advance, caused by shortage of petrol, had enabled the main party of raiders to escape from Baramula along the road to Uri and Domel.

Even before they reached Uri, the Indian column ran out of petrol at least twice and had to wait for replenishment from Srinagar. The civilian buses were unsuitable and too few to meet the needs.

The momentum of this victory should have taken the Indian forces straight to Muzaffarabad if only they had enough petrol and military motor transport. It was later revealed that the invaders were in a headlong retreat and there were no enemy troops in reserve even in Muzaffarabad to make a stand against the Indians. In between, most of the bridges had, of course, been blown up by the retreating forces some of them beyond repair and others incapable of permitting even a diversion.

On 14 November, Indian troops entered Uri, 65 miles from Srinagar, without much of a battle. With its recapture the first and most hazardous phase of the Kashmir campaign had been completed. An immediate threat to the Srinagar valley had been removed.

Revolt at Gilgit

As the tribal invaders were triumphantly driving up the Domel road towards Srinagar, a local revolution was being hatched up at Gilgit under inspiration from Peshawar. In pursuance of the British Government's announcement that the control and administration of Gilgit would be returned to the Jammu and Kashmir State late in July 1947, the Maharaja deputed Brigadier Ghansara Singh as Governor of Gilgit. No sooner did the latter arrive at Gilgit than he was faced with a catalogue of demands from the officers and JCOs of the Gilgit Scouts, who under the direction of certain British and Muslim officers had conspired to get Gilgit merged into Pakistan. The Governor, however, tried to win the sympathies of the local population who welcomed the return of Maharaja's rule. But the Gilgit Scouts under one Major Brown continued to remain sullen and as the tribal invaders were knocking at the gates of Srinagar, the tension increased at Gilgit. On midnight of 31 October, the Governor's residence was surrounded by the Scouts who demanded his immediate surrender,. The Governor was put under arrest and a provisional government was formed by the rebels under Major Brown. On 4 November, he ceremonially hoisted the Pakistan flag in the Scouts Lines in Gilgit and in the third week of November Peshawar sent its political agent to rule over the area. The Mirs and Rajas of the Gilgit district had no hand in the revolution, nor did the people of the territory take active part in it.

Joust with 'General Winter'

During the winter months, the Indian Army in Kashmir fought two enemies. Holding the raiders at bay was easy. Throughout the period, the raiders could not get an inch of territory, and every attempt to break through or bypass Uri was beaten back resolutely. But the Indian Army's joust with 'General Winter' was indeed a grim and heroic struggle.

A majority of Indian troops had never seen snow before. Nor were they armed with special snow-fighting equipment. With the blocking of the only land route to Srinagar by snow and the stoppage

of the air service, the supply situation became acute.

During these difficult months the Army in Kashmir largely remained on the defensive, confining itself to long-range reconnaissance and offensive patrolling. Its battle against the elements was fought by lone pickets perched on snowclad mountains and by patrols venturing out into uncharted country, breasting the blizzards and hailstorms.

The raiders made repeated attempts to storm our pickets one after the other. Every time they were beaten back. Failing either to break through or bypass Uri, the raiders advanced over the track linking Muzaffarabad with Tithwal and made for Handawor, on the northern approaches to the Srinagar valley. An Indian column met them there and dispersed them, recapturing some of the villages that had fallen into their hands.

The civil population suffered acutely from a shortage of salt, which sold at 10 rupees a kilogram in Srinagar. The brunt of the battle against winter was, however, borne by Indian Army drivers and sappers. Thanks to their efforts, from December to the end of March, three convoys, consisting of a total of 300 vehicles, got through to Srinagar. Each time, however, a few vehicles at the tail end of the convoy got stuck and remained buried in the snow.

Though the winter battle had been won, the 200 mile tenuous road, hewn in the side of the Himalayan ranges was now plagued with landslides. The sappers and the pioneers were kept busy sweeping these chunks of mountain out of the way, as supply convoys remained held up.

While, the Kashmir front hibernated, the activity in Jammu intensified, thanks to the advantages enjoyed by the enemy on this front, in the shape of shorter, better and more numerous lines of communication.

As against the single 75-mile road that we possessed from Jammu to Naushera, which was repeatedly rendered unusable by the winter rains, the raiders relied on shorter lines of communication consisting of the first class all-weather Jhelum-Mirpur road and Sialkot-Jammu road, besides numerous other tracks, to supply their troops.

Stung by their initial reverses against the Indian Army and enjoying as they did many material advantages, the hostiles in Jammu occupied themselves during the winter months in spirited attacks. One or two temporary successes were gained by them, as in the case of the recapture of Jhangar.

However, winter gave our commanders, for the first time, some respite to think and plan and regroup. Major General Kalwant Singh, GOC, Jammu and Kashmir Force, had valiantly struggled to build up a fighting machine from scratch, even while he fought a well prepared and resolute enemy. Now he gradually geared that machine for planned offensive operations.

Srinagar had been rendered safe. The menace to the Pathankot-Jammu line of communication had been effectively removed. By a forward policy and the institution of a chain of pickets, the Pakistan-Jammu border had been largely sealed off against nuisance raids from across. Our forward positions had been consolidated. The situation in the territory already held by the Indian Army had been stabilised and normal life restored. The task of looking after and administering relief to thousands of rescued refugees also fell largely to the lot of the Indian Army.

As winter gave way to spring, the back had been broken of all these problems, and General Kalwant Singh now planned to move forward.

The Leap Forward

The first objective of the spring offensive in Jammu was Rajauri, 30 miles north-west of Naushera. The advance began on 8 April 1948. Barwali ridge, seven miles north of Naushera, was the first hurdle. Moving under cover of heavy fire and effectively supported by tanks, a Dogra battalion charged the enemy's positions and occupied their objective by 4 pm. Chingas, half-way to Rajauri, was the next objective. From Barwali ridge the Indian column split up and fanned out, with different strategic features around Chingas which was entered by armoured cars. The armourd cars found the town in flames. The raiders had resorted to arson and murder before departing. It was a 'scorched earth' polity with a vengeance.

On the right flank, Rajputana Rifles operating from Kot maintained their advance and reached Mal village. An armoured column followed by Kumaonis entered Rajauri late in the evening of 12 April. This operation saved the lives of 1,200 to 1,500 refugees, mostly women. Of these 300 to 500 had been lined up to be shot when the Indian column arrived.

The atrocities committed by the hostiles in Rajauri put Baramula in the shade. Our troops expected a warm welcome from 5,000 refugees

as well as local inhabitants. When they entered the town, they were appalled by an eerie silence. Rajauri was a city of the dead and dying.

Before the hostiles departed, they had carried out a general massacre of the population. Heaps of rubble, mass graves and decomposing corpses told the tale. So did the sword and hatched wounds and burns on the person of the survivors who slowly trickled back to their destroyed homes.

The enemy reacted to their loss of Rajauri by mounting another determined attack on Jhangar. On 16 April, 6,000 raiders stormed that outpost, but were beaten back and suffered 200 casualties.

Representing a first thrust into the enemy's jaw, Jhangar became the object of repeated and energetic assaults by the raiders who could never reconcile themselves to the position and badly needed that vital road junction between Mirpur and Kotli.

The spring in Kashmir was devoted by both sides to building up for the impending burst of operational activity on that front. While the Indian Army was ambitiously planning a drive from Uri in the direction of Domel and Muzaffarabad, the enemy was busy bolstering up his defences to meet this threat and, at the same time, was pushing north-eastward via Gilgit with the intention of opening another front and knocking at the backdoor of the Srinagar Valley.

General Thimayya who was in command of the Srinagar Division projected an offensive directed towards Muzaffarabad on the western border. Brigadier Sen was to advance from Uri along the Domel road, while Brigadier Harbux Singh was to make a wide sweeping right hook via Handawor to Tithwal — a point hardly 18 miles on the northern flank of Muzaffarabad.

Capture of Tithwal

Starting on the night of 17-18 May from Handawor, 40 miles north east of Uri, Brigadier Harbux Singh's column made good progress, and on 23 May, entered Tithwal, covering 40 miles in six days through difficult roadless country.

The capture of Tithwal signified a major blow to the raiders, as it was dangerously close to Muzaffarabad, their main base, and it disrupted their main line of communication with their forward bases in the north and north-east.

Supporting the direct attack on Tithwal, another column simultaneously advanced towards Trahgam, 20 miles north-west of Handawor.

Notwithstanding tough opposition, they pushed on and then striking towards Tithwal, finally ended up by capturing Nastachan.

Brigadier Sen set out from Uri on 20 May, with one battalion north of the Jhelum, two battalions south of the road and one battalion and one armoured column along the road. There were no illusions about the task assigned to Brigadier Sen. Pitted against him was the largest and strongest concentration of the raiders, well equipped and armed with artillery.

There was heavy fighting for features on either side of the road. Some changed hands thrice in one day. Pandu, an important hill feature, 10 miles north-east of Uri, was captured on 23 May. On 27 May, the column advanced up to Urusa, overlooking Chakoti, the raiders' entrenched position along the road.

Pakistan Army Comes into the Open

The threat to Muzaffarabad, represented by this drive and its initial successes at Tithwal and around Uri, spread panic and alarm in Pakistan and 'Azad Kashmir'. If the Indian Army were allowed to reach Domel and Muzaffarabad, all would be lost for the cause of the raiders. Pakistan, which till then had helped the invaders covertly, now came out into the open and flung in more regular Pakistan Army battalions to stem the tide of the Indian Army's drive westward. They also brought up 4.2 inch mortars and medium guns.

Beyond Urusa, the Indian Army met the hard core of enemy resistance in the shape of regular Pakistan battalions. The fighting was fierce and desperate. Our advance was held up. Between 20 May and 27, the enemy losses were 1,126 killed, 6 prisoners of war and a large number wounded. Our own casualties were 51 killed, 80 wounded and four missing — very heavy, compared with the Indian Army's previous record in the Kashmir campaign.

As the advance of the main column came to a halt, a subsidiary column was sent out north of the Jhelum. At the same time, Brigadier Harbux Singh was ordered to strike towards Muzaffarabad from Tithwal. The former column concentrated at Pandu on 29 May and captured a 6,875 feet high feature. The enemy was dislodged only after three bayonet charges. His casualties were 20 killed and 35 wounded.

Then weather took a hand. It rained ceaselessly for two days, converting dry nullahs into raging streams and grounding our air-

craft. Both the columns were being maintained by air. The operation had to be postponed. The column from Uri returned to its base.

Yet another manoeuvre was attempted — this time, a left hook. A Gorkha battalion was sent down south along the Urusa nullah, while another battalion advanced to Ledi Gali. Amidst a hail of grenades and bullets, the Gorkhas captured the 10,924 high Pir Kanti ridge on 28 June, with a *kukri* charge. The enemy casualties were 54 counted killed; our own 7 killed and 51 wounded.

At this critical hour of Pakistan forces, the Anglo-American hand came to their rescue. On 10 July, the UN Commission on Kashmir arrived in India. The Commission appealed to both sides to refrain from offensive activity while they carried out their investigations. The Government of India immediately responded to the appeal and the Indian Army in Kashmir and Jammu was directed not to undertake fresh offensive action.

Pakistan, however, paid little heed to the appeal and launched a counter-attack at Pandu and recaptured it and also attacked our positions north of Kishenganga in the Tithwal area.

Pakistan, which had till now strenuously denied direct participation in the Kashmir fighting, confessed to the UN Commission that since May the Pakistan Army battalions had been fighting in Kashmir and that the Pakistan Army headquarters were in overall command of the operations in Jammu and Kashmir on their side of the line. The reason advanced was that the Indian Army's summer drive constituted a threat to Pakistan interests in Kashmir as well as across the border.

Since the push began on 17 May, General Thimayya's troops had cleared a 11-mile stretch of road between Urusa and Uri, and captured Handawor, Kupwara, Keran and Tithwal and established a forward position within 18 miles of Muzaffarabad and cut the enemy's line of communication to the north. In terms of territory, they had liberated 3,500 square miles.

Brigadier Usman Killed

All the time Jhangar in Jammu province continued to be the favourite target of the enemy's artillery practice. On the night of 3-4 July, the shelling of Jhangar was more intense than usual. Some 600 shells being pumped into our positions that night. One of them took the life of Brigadier Mohammad Usman, the hero of the battle of Naushera — an officer who distinguished himself as an outstanding soldier, a fear-

less leader and popular man who was loved by his *jawans* and trusted by the local civilian population.

He was the first Brigadier to be killed in Kashmir campaign. At his death there were rejoicings in 'Azad Kashmir' territory as well as in Pakistan, as he had become a terror to the enemy. In India he was hailed as a national hero. His body was flown to Delhi, where he was given a State funeral with full military honours. The Governor-General, the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Minister attended the funeral.

The Arctic Front

The raiders' plans for the summer lay in a different direction — the north-easterly direction. Losing all hopes of piercing the Indian Army's steel ring in the west at Uri and in the south-west in Jammu, they sought new adventures in the remote, semi-arctic, barren districts of Baltistan and Ladakh.

Between those districts and the Kashmir valley stood the gaunt, forbidding Himalayan ranges, with a few difficult, fair-weather, snow-covered mountain tracks serving as the only link. Their very inaccessibility made those districts safe for the activities of the raiders, putting them beyond easy range of the Indian Army's attention.

The raiders' projected summer campaign had three objectives aimed at dispersal of our forces — opening two more fronts, one in the north via Gurais and the other in the north-east via Zoji-la, and 'bagging' as much territory as possible in Baltistan and Ladakh. Gurais and Zoji-la are the northern and north-eastern gateways respectively to the Kashmir Valley.

All winter the raiders built up Gilgit, their possession in the northern frontier area, as the base for their summer campaign. Columns of raiders moved down from Gilgit and infiltrated southwards and south-eastwards.

By January, the pressure on the small State Force garrison in Skardu increased. Accompanied by a large number of refugees, the garrison of two companies shut themselves up in the Skardu fort. The raiders encircled the fort and bypassed it on their eastward movement towards Kargil and Ladakh.

Repeated attempts from Srinagar to send relief to the besieged Skardu garrison were foiled by the difficult nature of the country particularly in winter.

Though neither reinforcements nor supplies in any appreciable quantity could reach Skardu, the garrison, ordered to fight "to the last man and last round", held on grimly.

In the meantime, bypassing Skardu, the raiders overpowered another small State Force garrison at Kargil and then captured Dras, and thus cleared the way to Ladakh and Leh, its capital, the coveted objective of the eastward drive. And when the raiders infiltrated into the Ladakh district and skirmished with State Forces, the threat to Leh became imminent.

On 24 May, Air Commodore Mehar Singh undertook the most daring operation yet in his colourful career — a flight to Leh along an uncharted route, at 23,000 feet and over the world's highest mountain ranges. He flew without even oxygen. Accompanying him on the flight was General Thimayya. Mehar Singh landed on a rough improvised strip in Leh, constructed by a Ladakhi engineer, 11,554 feet above sea level. Two companies of Gorkhas were flown to Leh by the IAF in May and June.

The measures were taken in the nick of time. On 11 July, 1,000 raiders, armed with a 3.7 howitzer, launched an attack on the outposts of Leh. The attack was repulsed. As the pressure on Leh increased, the demand for supplies and reinforcements became insistent and urgent. Once again, the difficulties of terrain and the winter conditions were the major obstacles.

There were two land routes to Leh. The one from Srinagar passed through the snow-covered 11,578 feet high Zoji pass and through Kargil. Only 40 out of the 230 miles of the route were motorable. The rest of the journey had to be performed on horse or on foot. The route wends its way between and up and down bleak snow-mantled mountains. With Kargil in enemy hands, this route was out of the question. The second route to Leh was from Manali in East Punjab which was equally difficult and circuitous, running over 200 miles through thick jungles and Himalayan ranges.

Speedy help was the need of the moment. IAF transport planes became once again the only resort. Dakotas fitted up with improvised oxygen apparatus opened a ferry service between Srinagar and Leh. Landing on a strip, 11,500 feet high, was no picnic. The aircrafts kept their engines running while unloading and reloading for if the engines were switched off, they might not restart at that altitude.

The Leh garrison energetically built up its defences with the

help of the supplies flown in by IAF. Ladakhi volunteers were organised and trained into a local militia to fight side by side with the Indian and State forces.

Almost simultaneously with their eastward drive, the raiders moved down south from Gilgit into the Gurais valley, and passing over the Razdhanangan Pass (11,586 feet) got to Tragbal overlooking Bandipur, on the Wular Lake, 35 miles north of Srinagar.

General Thimayya got ready to meet this threat with two infantry battalions and a mountain battery. Gurais is a valley through which flows the Kishenganga, dominated on either side by a series of ranges of the Himalayas, running parallel to each other and nowhere below 11,000 feet, with most of them snowcovered all the year round. D-Day was 25 June. The operation largely consisted of climbing up and wresting from the enemy a series of steep snow-mantled features. The process began with the capture of Menon Hill (12857 feet) and Shete Hill (11,978 feet) and culminated in the conquest of the forbidding 14,218 feet high peak, Kesar. This peak was assaulted by our troops in a blizzard in the middle of the night.

Wet and shivering, the Indian Army troops kept up the momentum of their advance under a hail of machine-gun and mortar fire and were in Gurais by 28 June. Behind the capture of Gurais lies the story of phenomenal endurance and perseverance by the Indian Army troops and their engineers.

The fleeing raiders left behind a trail of their dead. The raiders also lost heavily in equipment and supplies. The most precious booty captured by our troops was the Frontier Constabulary blankets. Almost following on the heels of our advancing troops, Indian Army engineers unrolled a jeep track, from Bandipur to Gurais, a distance of 42 miles, within four weeks.

In the north-east, the raiders penetrated the Zoji-la and infiltrated into the Sonamarg valley. The Patialas guarding this gateway to Srinagar reacted energetically. They immediately engaged them and chased them beyond the Zoji-la. The Patialas mounted guard at the Zoji Pass by establishing pickets at 16,000 feet high peaks, while a jeep track crept towards them from Sonamarg.

On 14 August, the Skardu garrison was at last overwhelmed and surrendered to sheer weight of numbers. The State Force troops resisted till the last, with no hope of either relief or victory.

With the fall of Skardu, as apprehended, the raiders doubled their pressure on Leh. In August another company of Gorkhas was flown into Leh. In the same month two more companies of Gorkhas plus 800 rifles were also sent to Leh along the 203-mile mountain track via Manali in East Punjab. Yet another column followed them along the same route on 12 September, with 400 mules and 1,000 porters. Thus the defences of Leh were reinforced betimes to meet the danger.

The Battle of Zoji-La

As the precious summer months were fading out, the Indian Army had the satisfaction of securing the safety of the Kashmir Valley against invasion from the north and the north-east.

But two important jobs still remained outstanding. Both the tasks had to be accomplished before winter, if a calamity were to be averted. These were (a) reopening the road from Srinagar to Leh and removing the menace to the Buddhist district of Ladakh; and (b) the relief of the Poonch garrison, which had gallantly held out for a year against repeated assaults.

The Zoji Pass, 64 miles north-east of Srinagar, which links the Kashmir Valley with Ladakh, is dominated by high peaks on either side and is about two miles long, debouching into the Gumri basin.

Indian troops effectively controlled the western approaches to the Zoji-la, but the raiders held three ridges around the pass.

With plenty of time to choose their defensive positions, the raiders had sited their weapons to cover the defile along which our troops would have to advance.

Several attempts at the reduction of the enemy position having failed it was then decided that movement from our side was possible only by night or under cover of fire from tanks. The first alternative was ruled out as the hours of the night would prove insufficient for completion of the operation.

The second alternative was workable, if only the tanks could be brought up to this height and all the distance from Jammu. The tanks could sit in the pass with impunity, ignoring the enemy small-arms fire, and blanket his bunkers with shells, while our infantry advanced. But if tanks were to be brought, a road had to be constructed.

The bold decision was taken. In less than two months, the

Thangaraju road — named after Major Thangaraju who planned the project — from Baltal to Zoji-la, was laid down. At places the road had to be hewn out of sheer rock.

From Jammu to Baltal, seven Stewart ("Honeys") tanks travelled a distance of 260 miles incognito and under strict secrecy. They were covered with shrouds to conceal their identity. On the way, the tanks negotiated the frail Ramban bridge.

From Baltal to Zoji-la, the tanks negotiated their way around slippery hairpin bends and up a gradient of 3,000 feet in four miles.

D-Day was 20 October. Rain and snow on that day compelled postponement of the operation, and at one time it looked as though it could not be launched until the following spring. November 1 was fixed as the last possible date for launching the operation, because any delay beyond that date would have made stocking across the Zoji-la impossible, as the pass became blocked with snow in December.

Fortunately the weather cleared up in time, and under the natural cover of cloud, the tanks moved out at 10 am on 1 November. It was snowing as the tanks mounted the Zoji-la track. From the jeephead, the road constructed by our sappers meandered forward for two miles. Whether any track existed beyond that point nobody knew.

The tanks moved forward, crossed the Zoji-la and gingerly stepped on to the 'no man's land' in the Gumri basin. Solely relying for guidance on air reconnaissance reports, the tanks forged ahead through snowdrifts, glaciers, mountain streams and over boulders to reach the foot of Chabutra Hill.

The enemy opened up a barrage of fire, which recochetted harmlessly off the tank armour. Then the tank guns barked and systematically destroyed about 25 enemy bunkers and seized full control of Gumri by midday. Behind the tanks, the infantry moved in without much opposition.

The enemy was surprised and demoralised by the sight of the tanks in Gumri, which he had never expected. At 9 pm on 1 November, Patialas under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Sukhdeo Singh, set out from the Gumri basin. Walking surreptitiously throughout the night, a company of Patialas reached Machoi and covered the enemy from behind.

On finding themselves encircled on all sides, the hostiles were completely demoralised. Those who tried to flee were good targets

for our riflemen, others surrendered and saved their lives. On the 'North Ridge' our troops found a dismantled 3.7 howitzer. The enemy was obviously trying to carry it in parts while running away to safety.

The Patialas rested at Machoi on 2 November as they were on dry rations for more than 40 hours and the Rajputs under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Girdhari Singh pushed towards Matayan, six miles to the north-east of Machoi. Matayan eventually fell into our hands on 4 November at 3 pm.

Covering over ten miles of rugged terrain infested with enemy snipers, and wiping out all opposition, the Indian forces reached the Dras plain at 4.20 pm on 15 November. Our Force Commander, Brigadier H.L. Atal, Commander of 77 Para Brigade, was met by a delegation of two villagers from Dras who welcomed the Indian troops and announced that the hostiles had cleared out of Dras at 2 pm.

On reaching Dras our troops recovered rifles, brenguns, 50 cases of 3-inch and 2-inch mortar bombs, blankets, ground-sheets, warm jackets, medical stores and 3,000 maunds of firewood.

During the entire operation, IAF aircraft gave close support to our marching columns and strafed enemy dug-in gun and mortar positions on the mountain slopes on either side of the defile in Zoji-la as troops pushed forward. IAF aircraft also dropped thousands of leaflets on Dras and surrounding areas, advising the local population not to abandon their homes.

Continuing the mopping up of hostile pockets beyond Dras, Indian troops on the morning of 23 November, established positions at Kargil, the important trade and communication centre situated on the track leading to Skardu in the north, Dras and Srinagar in the west and Leh in the east.

Meanwhile, from the other side, consolidating their positions in the Nubra valley, Indian troops cleared hostiles from Khalatse, 50 miles west of Leh. Khalatse, situated at the track junction from Gilgit and Skardu in the north-west and from Srinagar, Dras and Kargil in the south-west, is the gateway to Leh.

Now only 45 miles of tortuous snow-covered mountain track lay between our troops in Kargil and those in Khalatse. Moving along this track, an Indian Army patrol from Khalatse established contact with our forward troops at Kargil on 24 November. The Indian troops then busied themselves with combing out the region for hostiles.

Thus the land-link between Srinagar and Leh was established after nearly six months. In the entire operation, the enemy suffered a total of 318 killed and 206 wounded. One enemy 3.7 howitzer, one 42-inch mortar, one 3-inch mortar and two 2-inch mortars and 14 rifles were captured. Our casualties were 40 killed, 86 wounded and 37 listed as missing. Casualties from frostbite were 350.

The Relief of Poonch

In Jammu, General Atma Singh launched his elaborately planned offensive for the relief of Poonch. By September, the hostile ring around Poonch had tightened and it threatened to strangle the garrison. The enemy brought up 25-pounders and put the airstrip — the only link with the outside world — out of commission. Intelligence and air reconnaissance reports indicated a heavy build-up in Bagh, an enemy base north-west of Poonch, with the obvious intention of extracting the thorn on their side, which was the Poonch garrison.

The first phase in the operation for the relief of Poonch comprised the capture of Thana Mandi, 12 miles north of Rajauri. After two days' push, Thana Mandi was secured. With Thana Mandi in our possession, hostile pockets in the Riasi district east of the Thana Mandi-Rajauri track, were already in the bag, being cut off and isolated from their bases.

Now preparations for the second phase of the operation were under way. The Operation was to be carried out in three phases; the capture of Pir Badesar and Pir Kalewa, the capture of Sangiot and its conversion into a firm base, and the final breakthrough and link-up with Poonch.

The enemy strength facing them was reported to be two battalions east of Rajauri-Thana Mandi, one brigade west of Rajauri, one brigade in Mendhar, on the way to Poonch, and one brigade south of Poonch.

Pir Badesar, 5,432 feet high was a stronghold of the hostiles, overlooking the entire Naushera and Seri valleys north-east of Jhangar. The operation was launched under the command of Brigadier Harbhajan Singh on the night of 14-15 October. In moonlight, a column of our troops mostly Gorkhas, marched through difficult, mountainous, trackless country on to the enemy-held Giran village. A half-asleep sentry challenged our leading section and asked for the password. A burst of bullets was the answer he received. A moment later, there was a fierce exchange of fire. Before long, the

last of the enemy fled, leaving behind his dead, dying and wounded.

After a series of skirmishes, which added to the demoralisation of the enemy, our advance column of Kumaonis was fast scaling Pir Badesar, and an hour before sunset, they were on top. The enemy's losses in this operation were 102 killed and 9 prisoners and 27 rifles captured.

The Pir Badesar operation was a deception. As intended, the move put the enemy on the wrong scent, giving the impression that our objective was Kotli instead of Poonch.

Pir Kalewa, a commanding feature astride the Rajauri-Thana Mandi road, was captured by another brigade on the afternoon of 26 October. This was comparatively an easier job, the enemy's losses being four killed and many more believed killed and wounded.

After consolidating their successes at Pir Badesar and Pir Kalewa and dispatching more men to defend the Pathankot-Chhamb stretch of the Jammu-Pakistan border, the Indian Army resumed the offensive for the link-up with Poonch.

On the night of 7-8 November, 5 Brigade moved forward to secure the right flank of Mendhar, while 19 Brigade took up the task of securing the left flank. The Rajauri column was detailed to capture Ramgarh fort and features in the vicinity, to protect the left flank of 19 Brigade.

After encountering heavy resistance from hostiles, the columns moved forward. As the sun was dipping behind the hills, Bhimber Gali itself was in our hands. Our positions were consolidated during the night and the next day, 9 November, Point 6,207 was taken.

The Rajauri column encountered heavy opposition at Ramgarh fort, five miles north-west of Rajauri, and the surrounding height. The fort area, on top a steep, pine-clad projection, was defended by three hostile battalions. The resistance was broken and the fort itself captured by midday on 9 November.

With Ramgarh in our hands, Indian troops from Chingas and the Pir Badesar area linked up with Ramgarh, thus removing the large enemy bulge towards Rajauri.

At Bhimber Gali, the Indian forces resumed their advance along both the flanks.

With the enemy well entrenched and the approach to it most difficult, a frontal attack appeared to be the only alternative, with the

inevitable accompanying loss of lives. The enemy was also holding features south of Mendhar in greater strength. The plan was accordingly changed and 19 Brigade was ordered to perform a right hook.

The night of 19-20 November was selected as the D-Day for final link-up operations. 168 Brigade from Poonch advanced and captured features south of Poonch. 5 Brigade captured Point 5,982 and effected the link-up with the Poonch column at 2 pm on 20 November. 19 Brigade captured Topa ridge. Mendhar itself was secured on 23 November and the features south of Mendhar were also taken. And Brigadier Pritam Singh, the defender of Poonch, and Brigadier Yadhunath Singh, commanding the leading relief column, shook hands.

Though the commander of the Poonch garrison had shaken hands with the Commander of the relief column, a lot of work yet remained to be done to insure the link-up and the safety of Poonch. The hostiles still had the town within range of their shells. To remove this threat an attack was launched on Salotri ridge which was taken after overcoming stiff resistance.

The capture of Salotri ridge exposed the enemy gun positions, and he had to pull them out. After the link-up, the Poonch garrison freed Suran and Mandi valleys astride the tracks to the north to Kashmir.

Having accomplished their appointed tasks in Jammu and Kashmir the Indian Army was now again on the defensive. While every enemy attack on our positions was resolutely repulsed, Indian troops, under strict orders from the Army headquarters, refrained from embarking on any fresh offensive operations. But IAF kept a strict vigil over enemy territory. Enemy concentrations were strafed around Kotli and Bagh with the object of dissolving their build-up for offensive activity in western Jammu.

On 14 December, while the cease-fire was still under negotiation between India and Pakistan, the hostiles laid down the biggest artillery bombardment of the campaign on our position around Naushera. They used 5.5 medium guns, a complete regiment of 25-pounders, 37 heavy ack-ack guns and 75 mm from medium tanks. Between 11.15 am and 8 pm that day, the hostiles fired 2,500 shells into an area seven miles radius of Naushera. At the farthest point, they picked on targets at Beri Pattan, ten miles south-east of Naushera.

Simultaneously, Pakistan's Sherman tanks fired at our position from an area two miles south-west of Sadabad. They were engaged and dispersed by Indian gunners. IAF aircraft on reconnaissance

also encountered heavy ack-ack fire from 40 mm anti-aircraft guns.

The cease-fire came into force a minute before midnight on the first day of the year 1949, which brought to a close a 15-month gruelling campaign for the Indian Army. Launched upon within a month and a half of the country's freedom, under every imaginable handicap and without any planning whatsoever, the Kashmir campaign was a fiery test for free India's Armed Forces. Out of the test they emerged with flying colours.

Kashmir in the Security Council

When on 26 October 1947, the Maharaja signed the instrument of accession and the Governor-General of India accepted it, the defence of Kashmir as an integral part of the country became the concern of the Government of India. And when Indian troops were flown to Srinagar on the morning of 27 October, to drive the raiders out of the State, there was a sharp reaction to this move from the side of Pakistan. Mr Jinnah who had moved up from Karachi to Lahore to be nearer the scene of operation and to watch the swift march of raiders on to Srinagar, seems to have felt greatly dejected at their failure to achieve the objective. He, therefore, in a moment of bitter disappointment ordered the acting commander-in-chief of his forces, General Sir Douglas Gracey, to dispatch troops to Kashmir. The General being fully aware of the shortcomings of the troops which were under his command and were still disorganised and badly equipped, was not prepared to obey Mr Jinnah's instructions without the approval of Marshal Auchinleck, who was the supreme commander in charge of administering the partition of the Indian Army. Auchinleck flew to Lahore at the express request of General Gracey and succeeded in persuading Mr Jinnah to cancel the order.

Mr Jinnah thereupon turned to diplomatic negotiations and invited Lord Mountbatten and Prime Minister Nehru to Lahore for a discussion on the situation. Pandit Nehru could not undertake the journey due to ill-health and so Lord Mountbatten went alone to Lahore where on 1 November, he had a long session with Mr Jinnah.

Mr Jinnah presented a three point proposal — a cease-fire, withdrawal of the forces of Indian Dominion and the tribesmen and a plebiscite under the joint control of the two Governors-General. Lord Mountbatten declined to accept the proposals pointing out his constitu-

tional inability to act without consulting his Cabinet. Lord Mountbatten during the course of discussion, however, asked the common-sense question of how Mr Jinnah could be responsible for withdrawing the tribesmen if he had no control over them, to which Mr Jinnah replied, "If you do this, I will call the whole thing off."

It was at this meeting that Lord Mountbatten suggested that a plebiscite be held under the auspices of the United Nations. But Mr Jinnah promptly rejected the idea.

Pakistan's Aggression on Kashmir

Meanwhile it was becoming increasingly clear to Indian forces engaged in driving out the tribal raiders, that Pakistan was giving all-out support to them in the shape of transport, arms, ammunition and military leadership. In several sectors Pakistani soldiers without uniform were actively fighting the Indians. Heavy artillery and anti-aircraft guns were freely brought into action and the Pakistan bases across the borders were used to build up reserves and supplies for the hostiles. The Indian army had captured prisoners, arms and documents in the course of their advance, proving that Pakistan was directly concerned in operations against India in Jammu and Kashmir State.

"That Pakistan", reported the *London Times,* "is unofficially involved in aiding the raiders is certain. Your correspondent has first hand evidence that arms, ammunition and supplies are being made available to the Azad Kashmir forces. A few Pakistani officers are also helping to direct their operations............ And however much the Pakistan Government may disavow intervention, moral and material support is certainly forthcoming."[8]

Then there is the evidence of an American Air Force Sergeant, Mr Haight, who enlisted as a volunteer with the raiders and actively fought against Indian forces, with the rank of Brigadier-General. After some months while on his way to America he revealed to the correspondent of the *New York Times,* that "gasolene — scarce and strictly rationed commodity — was supplied plentifully to the raiders by the Pakistan authorities............. Mr Haight also found Pakistan Army Personnel running the Azad Kashmir radio station, relaying messages through their own Pakistan Army receivers, organising and managing Azad encampments in Pakistan, and supplying uniforms, food, arms

8. *The Times,* (London) 13 January 1948.

and ammunition which, he understood, came from Pakistan Army stores through such subterfuges as the 'loss' of ammunition shipments."[9]

"Five years later in the summer of 1952, the Khan of Mamdot claimed from the Pakistan Government the sum of 68,000 rupees which he asserted, as Chief Minister of Punjab at that time he spent out of his own pocket to facilitate the tribesmen's invasion."[10]

Thus it was aid from Pakistan that was keeping the Kashmir 'war' going. The Government of India had only two alternatives if they were to expel the invaders from Kashmir soil which after the accession was Indian territory. They had either to carry the war into the enemy's camp, namely Pakistan territory which was furnishing the raiders with not only men and material, but also with bases of operation, or they had to dissuade Pakistan from giving this aid to them.

In his several telegrams, Pandit Nehru appealed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to deny assistance to the invaders. But all these efforts failed.

India's Complaint to the Security Council

Anxious for a peaceful settlement, India offered various proposals, none of which was accepted by Pakistan. Any action by India to attack the bases of the invaders in Pakistan would have meant direct conflict with Pakistan. The Prime Minister of India, in a letter dated 22 December 1947, informed the Prime Minister of Pakistan that if Pakistan did not deny to the invaders assistance and the use of Pakistan territory for operations against the State, India would be compelled to take such action, consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, as it might consider necessary to protect its interests. There was no response from the Pakistan Prime Minister. On 1 January 1948, India submitted a formal complaint to the Security Council under Chapter VI of the Charter, as India was anxious to avoid a direct conflict with Pakistan.

All proposals and offers for resolving the situation which India had made in her direct approaches to Pakistan, naturally lapsed when India took the matter to the Security Council.

The Government of India, in its complaint to the Security Council stated:

"In order that the objective of expelling the invader from Indian

9. *The New York Times*, 29 January 1948.
10. Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, p. 95.

territory and preventing him from launching fresh attacks should be quickly achieved, Indian troops would have to enter Pakistan territory; only thus could the invaders be denied the use of bases and cut off from their sources of supplies, and reinforcements, in Pakistan. Since the aid which the invaders are receiving from Pakistan is an act of aggression against India, the Government of India are entitled, in international law, to send their armed forces across Pakistan territory for dealing effectively with the invaders. However, as such action might involve armed conflict with Pakistan, the Government of India, ever anxious to proceed according to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, desire to report the situation to the Security Council in accordance with the provisions of Article 35 of the Charter. They felt justified in requesting the Council to ask the Government of Pakistan:

(1) to prevent Pakistan Government personnel, military and civil, participating in or assisting the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir State;

(2) to call upon other Pakistan nationals to desist from taking any part in the fighting in Jammu and Kashmir State;

(3) to deny to the invaders:

    (a) access to and use of its territory for operations against Kashmir;

    (b) military and other supplies;

    (c) all other kinds of aid that might tend to prolong the present struggle."

Pakistan Denies Aggression

When the Security Council took up the matter for consideration, Pakistan emphatically denied that it had any part in the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan's representative however, brought forth countercharges against India particularly its attitude towards Pakistan, Junagarh and Muslims in general.

In its resolution dated 17 January 1948, which was accepted by Pakistan and India, the Security Council called upon Pakistan and India:

(i) "to take immediately all measures within their power (including public appeals to their people) calculated to

improve the situation and to refrain from making any statements and from doing or causing to be done or permitting any acts which might aggravate the situation; and

(ii) to inform the Security Council immediately of any material change in the situation which occurs or appears to either of them to be about to occur while the matter is under consideration by the Council, and consult with the Council thereon."

United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan

Between 22 January and 4 February, the Security Council held eight meetings on this matter. A number of draft resolutions were put forward by the members which were greatly weighted in favour of Pakistan. The real issue was being obscured. As the Prime Minister of India put it, "the nations of the world sitting on that body got lost in power politics."

Meanwhile fighting continued in Kashmir. After several meetings a joint draft resolution was produced by the Security Council on 17 April, which declared that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was likely to endanger international peace and security, and therefore, the Council recommended the setting up of a Commission of five members "to proceed at once to the Indian sub-continent and there place their good offices and mediation at the disposal of the Governments of India and Pakistan."

India, however, rejected the draft resolution as in the words of the Indian representative, Mr Ayyangar, "it tars us with the same brush and makes us look like the co-accused". But the Security Council adopted the resolution on 21 April and by 7 May, the membership of the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was completed. The government of India informed the Security Council that it would not be possible to implement those parts of the resolution against which it had already objected. "If, however, the Commission was sent, the Government of India would be glad to confer with it."[11]

Pakistan Admits Aggression

"When at last the Commission was dispatched to India and Pakistan, they got "the first bombshell. Sir Zafrulla Khan informed

11. S. C. O. R/ Third Year No. : 74, pp. 6-7.

the Commission when it landed in Karachi on 5 July 1948, that three Pakistan brigades had been on Kashmir territory since May. He explained the measure as an act of self-defense."[12]

Earlier the same Pakistan Foreign Minister had solemnly declared before the Security Council that Pakistan had no part in the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir and had even denied the giving of assistance to the irregulars. Persistent denials by Pakistan might have temporarily misled the unsuspecting and the unwary; but once the UN Commission arrived on the sub-continent of India, the facts could no longer be concealed.

Later in their resolution of 13 August, the Commission at last recognised the falsity of Pakistan's denials in the following words:

> "As the presence of troops of Pakistan in the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes a material change in the situation since it was represented by the Government of Pakistan before the Security Council, the Government of Pakistan agrees to withdraw its troops from that State."

Two years later on 5 September 1950, Sir Owen Dixon, who succeeded the Commision as UN Representative for India and Pakistan, reached a similar conclusion.

> ".......When the frontier of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was crossed.......by the hostile elements, it was contrary to international law and when in May, 1948, units of the regular Pakistan forces moved into the territory of the State, that too was inconsistent with international law."

The fighting in Kashmir had become more extensive and more serious. The Commission, therefore, addressed itself to bringing about a cease-fire, and in pursuance of this objective had several meetings with the Governments of India and Pakistan. Finally after careful consideration they adopted a resolution on 13 August 1948. The government of India accepted this resolution while Pakistan declined to accept it. They were banking upon the success of their arms in Kashmir, having launched an all-out offensive to defeat the Indian forces and capture the State.

Pakistan High Command was convinced by the fall of 1948 that it could not attain its objective by force, and thereupon they gave greater heed to the negotiations and the UNCIP formulated a

12. Korbel, op cit, p. 121.

further resolution to supplement the earlier resolution of 13 August 1948. The draft of this further resolution was accepted by the Government of India on 23 December and by Pakistan on 25 December 1948. As the terms of the resolution were accepted by both the Governments before it was actually passed by the Commission, a cease-fire was ordered from 1 January 1949.

The Basic Resolution of 13 August 1948

The assurances given to the Prime Minister of India by the Commission were public and known to Pakistan. These assurances on the basis of which alone India accepted the two Resolutions, and which form part of the reports of the Commission and are official records of the Security Council,included the following :

1. Responsibility for the security of the State of Jammu and Kashmir rests with the Government of India.
2. The sovereignty of Jammu and Kashmir Government over the entire territory of the State shall not be brought into question.
3. There shall be no recognition of the so-called Azad (Free) Kashmir Government.
4. The territory occupied by Pakistan shall not be consolidated to the disadvantage of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
5. The administration of the evacuated areas in the north shall revert to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and its defence to the Government of India who will if necessary, maintain garrisons for preventing the incursion of tribesmen, and for guarding the main trade routes.
6. Pakistan shall be excluded from all affairs of Jammu and Kashmir in particular in the plebiscite,if one should be held.
7. If a plebiscite is found to be impossible for technical or practical reasons, the Commission will consider other methods of determining fair and equitable conditions for ensuring a free expression of the people's will.
8. Plebiscite proposals shall not be binding upon India if Pakistan does not implement Parts I and II of the resolution of 13 August 1948.

The legality of the State's accession to India was never questioned by the Security Council or the Commission. In fact, on 4 February 1948,

the US Representative in the Security Council said:

> "The external sovereignty of Kashmir is no longer under the control of the Maharaja....... with the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, this foreign sovereignty went over to India and is exercised by India, and that is how India happens to be here as a petitioner."

The legal Adviser to the UN Commission came to the conclusion that accession was legal and could not be questioned. The Commission recognised this position in its report and its two resolutions of 13 August 1948, and 5 January 1949, as also the consequential position that Pakistan had no *locus standi* in the State except that of an aggressor.

The basic resolution of 13 August 1948, is in three parts. Part I requires a cease-fire, non-augmentation of military potential on either side and the maintenance of a peaceful atmosphere. Under Part II Pakistan had to withdraw all her forces, regular and irregular, while India was required to keep sufficient troops for the security of the State including the observance of law and order. Part III provided as follows:

> "The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people and to that end, upon acceptance of the Truce Agreement both Governments agree to enter into consultation with the Commission to determine fair and equitable conditions whereby such free expression of will be assured."

Obviously Part III of the resolution could come into focus only after Parts I and II had been fully implemented. The United Nations Military observers were sent out to assist in establishing the cease-fire line and to investigate reports of its violation. By July 1949, the cease-fire line had been demarcated.

Basic Issue Clouded

Right from the time of the cease-fire, the efforts of the Commission and its various representatives and mediators were to induct into office the Plebiscite Administrator appointed in persuance of the UN resolution of 13 August 1948. Ignoring the basic issue of the Resolution of 13 August 1948, that Pakistan should vacate the aggression first, the Security Council passed numerous resolutions and appointed a

number of mediators and negotiators, but as their proposals went across the position held by India and recognised by the Security Council all these proposals failed. First came the proposals from Mr MCNaughten of Canada, followed by those of Sir Owen Dixon. Dr Graham laboured for two years to find a solution to the holding of a plebiscite. But since Pakistan was not willing to withdraw its troops from the territory occupied by it, his mission failed.

Situation Alters Materially

Meanwhile the situation was radically altered when Pakistan agreed to accept military aid from the United States of America. Jawaharlal Nehru in his statement in Parliament on 1 March 1954, declared that "this grant of military aid by the United States to Pakistan creates a grave situation for us in India and for Asia. It adds to our tensions. It makes it much more difficult to solve the problems which have confronted India and Pakistan.....there has thus far been no agreement on this issue (demilitarisation in Kashmir). Now the whole issue has to be considered from an entirely different point of view when across the border, across the cease-fire line on the other side, large additional forces are being thrust from outside in Pakistan and put at the disposal of Pakistan. It does make a difference."

Pakistan continued to violate its obligations under 13 August 1948 resolution, by carrying on a hate propaganda against Kashmir, but this could not mislead all the people. In December 1955, Mr Khrushchev during his visit to Kashmir declared that "the question of Kashmir as one of the States of India has already been decided by the people of Kashmir."

In the meantime the Kashmir Constituent Assembly which had been busy in framing a Constitution for the State had completed its work and was to be dissolved after the adoption of the Constitution confirming the State's accession to India. The Security Council on the representation of Pakistan called a hurried meeting in Lake Success in January 1957.

Menon's Exposition of the Situation

Mr Krishna Menon, India's representative at the Security Council removed the cobwebs that had gathered round the whole issue and brought back to light the basic resolution of 13 August 1948. The world, thanks to the clever propaganda of Pakistan, had by then come to believe that it was India that was at fault. In his long and

masterly speech, spread over nine meetings of the Security Council (23 January to 21 February 1957) Mr Menon expounded the Indian case and showed in glaring light that it was Pakistan which had failed to carry out its obligations and commitments to India and the United Nations.

He pointed out that one of the principles laid down in the resolution was that a material change in the situation having been brought about by the presence of Pakistan army in the State, there should be a withdrawal of troops of Pakistan from the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It was only when the Commission notified the Government of India that the tribesmen and Pakistan nationals had, and the Pakistan Army was being withdrawn, that India would begin the withdrawal of the bulk of her forces. The resolution has three parts. Part I lays down conditions and procedure for effecting a cease-fire, Part II deals with the procedure of a truce agreement, and Part III lays down the procedure of holding a plebiscite. He showed that it was "a concertina resolution. Unless (A) is accomplished, (B) cannot be undertaken; unless (B) is accomplished, (C) cannot be undertaken. Apart from what (C) means — something to which I have referred — (B) has not been implemented, and so unless there is truce, unless there is evacuation, how does the Security Council contemplate the idea of anything in the nature of an assessment of the will of the people in the Pakistan occupied areas, with forty-five battalions of these forces, the entire army of Pakistan, right up on our frontiers?"

Plebiscite Ruled Out

Conditions in Kashmir had materially altered since the day the Security Council was seized of the question. During these 15 years Kashmir, the part of the State that is free, had made allround progress politically, economically and socially. Land reforms were implemented, canals dug, a network of roads built. The tourist trade was flourishing. Education was free from the primary to the post-graduate classes. New schools and colleges were opened, dispensaries and hospitals established, refugees rehabilitated and development plans implemented courageously and with enthusiasm.

The conditions prevailing were thus quite different from those in 1947. To have a plebiscite now would amount to throwing all this progress to the wind by creating uncertainty and chaos which might throw open the floodgates of communal disorder not only in Kashmir but in India and Pakistan.

What the people of the State as well as the people from the rest of India demanded, was the removal of aggression by Pakistan from Indian territory in Kashmir. "But", declared Mr Menon, "so far as India is concerned, even in order to redress her wrongs, even in order to restore her territories to assert the sovereignty which the Security Council had at no time challenged, and what is more, repeated time after time, she will in no case resort to force. But at the same time, if her territory is violated she will use the provisions of the Charter to defend what is hers under the law and in terms of her possession."

Chinese Aggression

Perhaps the most ignoble act of Pakistan during the long years of negotiation, mediation and intervention by the United Nations, was her attempt to blackmail India into surrendering her position on Kashmir. This happened in the fall of 1962 when China launched an unprovoked aggression against India.

By the end of the fifties, thanks to a stable government under the stewardship of Jawaharlal Nehru, India had nearly reached the stage of a self-reliant economy. This was rather unpalatable to China whose development programme was power-oriented, based upon centralised control over the people in contrast to India's democratic methods. Hence the Chinese sought rapid expansion of the country's international, political and military potential.

To realise their expansionist ambitions, the Chinese created an imaginary border dispute with India. This was aimed at securing strategic command of the northern approaches of India and humiliating her in the eyes of the world, and of her neighbours in particular, and reducing her to a state of impotence.

The 'dispute' concerns three sectors. The first is the eastern part of the frontier from Bhutan to Burma known as the McMahon line which was actually delineated at a Tripartite Conference in Simla in 1913-14 between the Governments of India, Tibet and China. The second sector concerns the frontier where Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab come up to the Chinese border. The third known as the western sector concerns Indian boundary in Kashmir with China.

The Indian maps for nearly a century have been showing the traditional international frontier in this sector which follows well

defined geographical features and has been defined as follows:

> "Between Lanak La (34°24' N and 79°34' E) and Chang La (32°2' N and 79°22' E) in the Ladakh region of the State of Jammu and Kashmir the international boundary follows the eastern and western watershed of the Chang Chemmo and southern water shed of Chumesang and thence the southern bank of Chumesang and the eastern bank of Changlung Lungpa. Skirting the western extremity of the eastern half of Pangong Tso (called Yaerhmu in Chinese maps) the boundary thence follows the Ang watershed and cutting across Spanggur Tso, follows the north-eastern and northern watershed of the Indus."

The boundary thus includes a large piece of territory known as Aksai Chin projecting out to the north-east. The altitude of this area — over 16,000 feet — and the composition of its soil together with extremely cold climate, makes it unfit for human habitation. Known as the Soda Plain, the area is desolate where not even a blade of grass grows. But it has considerable strategic value for the Chinese as forming the shortest road link between Tibet and Sinkiang.

Taking undue advantage of the traditional friendship with India, strengthened by the principles of Panchsheel to which both the governments had subscribed, the Chinese without even informing the Government of India constructed a motorable road over this Indian territory in 1956-57 from Yehcheng in Sinkiang to Gartok in Tibet. The only excuse they could give was that they did not come across any Indian patrol and therefore thought that the Indian authority had never been established nor exercised over the area.

The full blast of Chinese propaganda against India began soon after the Tibetan revolt. The persistent theme was that the so-called reactionary circles in India had sparked the Tibetan revolt; the recurrent accusation against the Indian Government was that they had given asylum to the Dalai Lama. Hence they justified a counteraction, quiet and furtive, of the occupation of more than 12,000 square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh, and of Long-ju in the NEFA.

The first incident on the Ladakh border occurred in October 1958, when the Chinese troops crossed into Indian territory and occupied the Khurnak Fort. That this point was actually in the Kashmir territory was accepted as early as 1924 in a conference of the representatives of Kashmir State of India and the Tibet Region of China. No claim had been even affirmed that the Fort formed part of the Tibet Region of

China. The Indian Government lodged a protest with the Chinese Government at this incursion into Indian territory in July 1958, and informed them that the Government of India proposed to send a reconnaissance party to the area.

The patrol which was actually sent to the area near Shinglung could not be traced. The Government of India lodged another protest in October over the construction by Chinese of a motor road across Aksai Chin area. It also made enquiries concerning the missing patrol since the Chinese had now their personnel in this part of Indian territory and might be having information about the missing patrol. The Chinese in their Memorandum of 3 November 1958 replied that they had actually put the patrol under detention, but "in the spirit of Sino-Indian friendship" had ordered the military authorities in the area to "deport them from Chinese territory through the Karakoram Pass on 22nd October".

Further incidents occurred throughout 1959. On 20 July, Chinese forces penetrated into Indian territory near the Pangong Lake and took captive an Indian police party engaged in reconnaissance work. They then established themselves at Spanggur (33.34 N and 79.48 E). The Government of India in their Note of 30 July, to the Counsellor of China in India protested against this violation of Chinese forces from there.

The most serious incident occurred in October of the same year. An Indian police party, on patrol near the Kong Ka Pass in the Changchenmo Valley in Ladakh had its three members detained by the Chinese frontier guards. A search party was sent out on the following day but was fired on by the Chinese. In this encounter nine Indians were killed and seven captured. Those who were captured were put to severe interrogation for several days and confessions obtained from them under pressure. Finally on Indian protest they were released and returned on 14 November.

The Chinese Prime Minister proposed that to avoid further clashes, the Chinese and Indian armed forces should withdraw 20 kilometres from the line up to which both countries had established control, although unarmed police and civil administration should still be allowed to function in the respective areas. Pandit Nehru made a counter-suggestion that Indian personnel should be withdrawn to the west of the line which the Chinese Government considered to be the boundary line, as shown on its latest maps, while Chinese personnel

should be withdrawn to the east to the boundary line as shown on Indian maps. This arrangement, he pointed out, would leave a considerable space between the forces of the two countries, and being of a mountainous nature would not require any civil or administrative personnel. The Chinese Premier, however, declined to accept the proposal, as it would tantamount to the withdrawal of Chinese personnel from Aksai Chin through which they had built a road.

Finally after much correspondence the two Premiers met in Delhi in April 1960. The meeting could not produce any agreement between the Premiers concerning the points at issue. It was, however, decided that the historical material should be further studied both in Peking and Delhi by Chinese and Indian officials, and reports made to their respective governments on the results of their research.

After three meetings which the officials of the two countries had in Delhi, Peking and Rangoon, they presented a report to the Chinese and Indian Governments in February 1961.

The evidence relating to the Western Sector produced by the Indian side showed that at least from the tenth century onwards important points on the present Indian alignment were recognised as the traditional limits of Ladakh on the one side and Tibet on the other. There were a large variety of documents and unofficial maps of different countries including China which established that at least from the sixth century onwards the southern limits of Sinkiang did not lie south of the Kuen Lun ranges and only reached up to these ranges towards the end of the 19th century. This makes it clear that the Aksai Chin Plateau and the Lingzitang plains were never a part of China. There was also documentary evidence establishing that these areas had been utilised by the people of Ladakh and administered by the governments of Ladakh and Kashmir. Police check posts, for instance, had been maintained by the Kashmir Government in the Aksai Chin area as far back as 1865. There were also continued series of revenue and assessment reports covering in detail all the areas now claimed by China. Trade routes running through this area were maintained by the Kashmir Government and in 1870 the British Indian Government signed an agreement with the government of Kashmir securing permission to survey the trade routes in these areas.

A startling fact which came to light during these discussions was that the Chinese side declined to discuss questions pertaining to the boundary of Kashmir State west of the Karakoram pass. This refusal

tantamounted to questioning the legality of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India. The intentions of the Chinese side with regard to this section became clear when it was announced in May 1962 that Pakistan and China were considering the opening of talks between the two governments with regard to the delineation of the boundary of Kashmir State west of the Karakoram pass. The Government of India in a Note dated 30 June 1962, said that China had not only departed from its earlier policy of non-interference in the Kashmir dispute, but was giving "legal and moral encouragement to an aggressor State and prejudicing the prospects of a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan."

The Chinese aggression assumed sinister proportions on 8 September 1962, when a Chinese force stepped across the established boundary in the eastern sector. Meanwhile they were building up in strength their military potential on the sector with a view to launching a fierce offensive.

On 20 October, they launched a treacherous, large scale attack in both NEFA and Ladakh. It was no longer an incursion but a full-fledged invasion.

The Indian forces, ill-clad and ill-equipped, were overwhelmed by enemy troops and by heavy artillery, mountain guns and mortars which the Chinese forces had brought with them. They had to yield ground and the Chinese were able to occupy several strategic points both in NEFA and in Ladakh.

The nation rose as one and there were spontaneous demonstrations of national solidarity and determination to face the aggressor with all the resources India could mobilise. World opinion condemned in vehement terms naked aggression of China against a peace-loving nation.

Finally having stretched their lines of communication to a dangerous extent and realising the consequences of a prolonged war with a nation determined to defend its freedom at all costs, the Chinese declared a cease-fire on 21 November 1962, and withdrew to the line they had occupied on 8 September. Though there have been no serious clashes between the armed forces of India and China all these years, the aggression continues in as much as China is still in occupation of large slices of Indian territory in both the sectors.

Attempt at Blackmail

While India was fighting back the Chinese aggression and the world was extending all moral and in some cases material support to her effort, Pakistan which for over two years had been making overtures to China to enter into some sort of agreement with her against India, tried now to play a double game. Her Western allies were in a quandary. Pakistan, which they had assiduously built up as a bastion against China, was playing them false due to her ingrained hatred for India. They wanted now to repair the breach and asked Pakistan not to play an active role on the side of China. But Pakistan demanded a price : and the price was Kashmir.

So the Western friends of Pakistan turned to India as usual to accommodate the blackmailer. They believed their 'advice' would now carry weight, seeing how actively they were placing their military equipment and funds at India's disposal in her confrontation with China. Averell Harriman of America and Duncan Sandys of Britain made frantic efforts to bring the two countries around a conference table. In pursuance of their request Sardar Swarn Singh, India's Foreign Minister and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, representing their respective countries met at Rawalpindi on 27 December. Their first round of talks during which they held five meetings, lasted for two days. At the opening session of the Ministerial Conference, Sardar Swaran Singh expressed India's desire for "mutually" beneficial cooperation based on friendship between the two countries." But Pakistan was not interested in developing friendly relations with India. Under the pretence of demarcating the boundary between China and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, she had been for over two years offering to China the surrender of a large area out of the State territory. On the eve of the Conference, the Governments of China and Pakistan simultaneously announced an "agreement in principle" on the alignment of the border between Sinkiang and the part of Kashmir under Pakistan occupation. The timing of this statement was apparently intended to provoke India to refuse to start the talks the next morning. "But" revealed Jawaharlal Nehru in the Lok Sabha after the failure of the talks, "we decided to continue with them."

To sound the death knell of the talks, Pakistan announced the so-called agreement "under which she gave away as much as two thousand square miles of our territory to China. This was done on March 2, 1963." It was a hard meal for even Pakistan's Western allies to digest. A bitter criticism was voiced in the Anglo-American press

over her attempts at blackmailing India and for her opportunistic foreign policy. In his speech in the Lok Sabha on 13 August 1963, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the inside story of the discussions:

> "When the Pakistan delegation shifted from the futile discussion of plebiscite to the consideration of a possible political settlement, they began to put forward astounding proposals....Pakistan's objective was obviously not a rational and realistic solution of the problem. They were just out to claim the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir, leaving to India, as it happened in a forgotten moment of generosity, an insignificant area in the extreme south, roughly coinciding with the district of Kathua."

Finally the talks were called off by Mr Bhutto. However, India made it clear, at the end of the talks, that she had withdrawn all those political concessions in Kashmir which she had offered for the sake of a settlement, during the course of the ministerial discussions.

22

THE NEW KASHMIR

When on 26 October 1947, the Maharaja appealed to the Governor-General of India, Lord Mountbatten, for military assistance against the invaders, he revealed his intention of forming an interim government in which Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah would be associated with his Prime Minister. This decision of the Maharaja was dictated by the fact that to fight back the invasion successfully it required the whole-hearted cooperation and support of the masses, represented by their political organisation, the National Conference. The ensuing months proved that it was a wise decision.

Popular Government

For, with his departure to Jammu along with the entire council of ministers, on the night of 26 October, the Valley was left without a government and there was thus an apprehension of widespread disorders and consequent chaos seizing the land. It was at this moment of grave crisis that the National Conference stepped in to fill the vacuum. At once the District and Mohala Committees of the Conference took over the functions of local administration and organised companies of volunteers to keep the peace and restore confidence among the people. Soon they had to face another problem, that of refugees pouring into Srinagar from the areas overrun by the raiders. They had to be given shelter and food. The citizens volunteered to take in batches of refugees into their own homes and to feed them till better arrangements were made. The more difficult problem was to keep the masses well informed of the real intention of the raiders — the complete enslavement of the people — and not be misled by their self-assumed title of 'liberators of Muslim Kashmir'. This became more complicated with the reports reaching the Valley

of communal disturbances in Jammu, where the incoming Hindu refugees from outlying districts and West Pakistan had forced the Muslims to emigrate wholesale to Pakistan. Fortunately, the communal peace and amity was not disturbed by these happenings and the masses kept steadfastly on to the path of communal harmony and of raising a united front against the invaders.

To this purpose, a small force of National Militia was raised and trained. The young recruits fired with patriotic zeal faced the invaders and at several points pushed them back. They naturally had to suffer casualties, but this did not reduce the steady flow of volunteers enrolling themselves in the Militia. After going through a short course of training, they went to the front and fought side by side with their comrades-in-arms from the rest of India.

The winter of 1947-48 was a severe one, and immediately after the raiders were driven out beyond Uri, it snowed heavily, and the road and air communications between the Valley and the rest of India were completely cut. As already noted, Pakistan had enforced an economic blockade of the State during the previous summer and there was an acute shortage of all essentials of life in the Valley. Particularly did the people feel the want of salt which could not be had even for 10 rupees a kilogram. Similarly sugar, cloth, kerosene and petrol were non-available. Efforts were made to bring in supplies from over the snowbound Banihal pass on porters, but it was a fight against Nature. The people with a grim determination bore these hardships and kept their morale high.

With the coming of spring the road link was again established with Jammu. Supplies trickled through with the help of some old and rickety trucks. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, however, soon got a fleet of new truck chasis from Bombay. The Kashmiri drivers worked day and night to keep the convoys moving with their precious load of the truck chasis. Thus came into being the Government Transport Department, which can now boast of hundreds of trucks, buses, cars, an efficient and uptodate workshop, and which now handles the major portion of goods and passenger traffic in the State.

The wholesale importers had lost their business contacts following the upheaval in the Punjab, and the imports had to be financed by the cooperative store set up for this purpose.

With the returning of normal conditions, other problems cropped up. The tourist trade had come to a standstill, the fruit and cottage

industries of the Valley suffered due to lack of transport. There was thus widespread unemployment. The Indian Army, however, gave some relief by recruiting a labour force and purchasing suitable local goods essential for the prosecution of the campaign against the raiders. But it was of only a temporary nature. Trade had to be revived. A number of emporia were opened in various cities in India, and trade commissions were set up to enable the exporters and importers of the State to re-establish their business contacts with the trade centres in India and abroad. In fact, these measures proved a boon to the workman, as he could now dispense with the services of the middleman who had been exploiting him so far. This silent revolution in the industrial and commercial set-up of the Valley, naturally gave birth to the industrial and multi-purpose cooperative societies in the State.

Meanwhile the fight against the invaders was going on with relentless vigour. The Emergency Administration rendered all-out assistance to the Army by providing civilian transport vehicles, pack-ponies, porters and labour. It built roads and bridges to enable a faster movement of troops. Accommodation for the army staff head-quarters and for the troops on the march was provided in Government and private buildings. Above all, the administration and the National Conference kept up the morale of the people by their example and precept. The Cultural Front set up under the direct supervision of Kh. G.M. Sadiq, with its dramatic performances, posters and popular songs and ballads was responsible for rousing the masses to a re-doubled effort in driving out the raiders from the State.

As 1947 rolled out Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah prevailed upon the Central Government to make the Maharaja dispense with the services of Mehar Chand Mahajan as Prime Minister. Thereupon the Maharaja conceded on 5 March 1948, full responsible government to the people. The Emergency Administration was converted into a regular Council of Ministers with Sheikh Abdullah as the Prime Minister.

Land Reforms

The people had now every right to expect their popular government to implement the programme of social and agrarian reform as envisaged in the 'New Kashmir' Plan. As an immediate relief to the peasants the government enacted laws for the protection of the tenant. They could no longer be ejected from the land. Previously the tenant had to provide seed and agricultural implements and give

the landlord 50 per cent of the crop. Now he was allowed to retain two thirds of the production of paddy, pulses and other cash crops.

A moratorium was declared on debts incurred by the peasants and workers and with the institution of Debt Conciliation Courts old debts which were pressing heavily on the peasantry were scaled down by about 80 per cent from 11.1 million to 2.4 million rupees. The peasants could also have their rights reinstated in mortgaged property.

In April 1949, the government appointed a Land Reforms Committee to prepare a plan for the abolition of big landed estates and transfer of land to the tiller. The total cultivated area in the State was about 2,200,000 acres, most of which belonged to the Maharaja, his Jagirdars and a class of landlords called Chakdars. The landlords rented the land to the peasants under feudalistic conditions of tenure. They were paid by their tenants partly in kind and partly in cash. Besides, there were Mukararis who received cash payments from the State treasury under various religious and non-religious titles. The latter privileges were abolished forthwith with the exception of some grants to religious endowments.

But before the Land Reforms Committee had prepared and submitted its report, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah announced drastic and sweeping land reforms in a speech from the National Conference platform. The assent of the Maharaja, the Head of the State, was not obtained and this announcement had to be regularised later by the enactment of a law.

The landlord was allowed to keep not more than 160 *kanals* (29 acres) of agricultural land, 8 *kanals* (1 acres) of land for vegetable gardening, 4 *kanals* ($\frac{1}{2}$acre) as residential site and 10 *kanals* (1.25 acres) of orchards—altogether 182 *kanals* (22.75 acres). The expropriated land was to be transferred in full ownership to the tenant to the maximum of 160 *kanals* (20 acres). He had to pay the regular land revenue. All lands which were not under cultivation or not rented and in excess of 182 *kanals* were transferred to the government for distribution among landless tillers or for collective farming. The question of payment of compensation, if any, was to be decided by the Constituent Assembly to be set up later.

The reform no doubt was aimed at freeing the peasant from the unbearable burden of complete economic dependence on the landlord. In practice, however, it did not fulfil its intended objective, namely allotment of land to landless peasants. Without formulating a

regular plan and enacting a law, the leaders announced the outline of the scheme from public platforms to gain minor political advantages. When it became known that the landlords had to surrender their estates above 182 *kanals,* there was a scramble among the more influential peasants for the would be expropriated land, and the *patwaris* entered into negotiation with tenants and other villagers on the method of sharing it. Ultimately when the law came into force, it was found that most of the distributable land had already been allotted to non-deserving people. It was found that in many cases a tenant who shared in the distribution of his landlord's extra land was himself the owner of much larger area. The government did not, moreover, take into consideration the plight of those disabled persons and widows whose only means of livelihood was their land.

In the educational field the government took positive steps towards a revolutionary change in adopting the mother tongue of the boys as the medium of instruction in the primary classes. Multi-purpose schools besides imparting education in arts and sciences, gave instruction and practical lessons in handicrafts. More schools and colleges were opened, notably a women's college in Srinagar. But the most important measure was the setting up of a University in the State.

Education had made rapid progress in the State after 1931 and the number of students appearing in various University examinations was increasing in geometric progression. All the colleges in the State were affiliated to the Punjab University of Lahore. With the partition, the Indian Part of the University had to face strenuous times and to set itself up from scratch. It naturally created a great difficulty for the students of the State. The Jammu and Kashmir University thus came into existence on 1 November 1948.

The Central Government extended its helping hand in setting up the University. Apart from financial aid from the Government, it received moral support from top ranking personalities in India. The first Convocation in 1949 was addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari addressed its Convocation in 1950 and 1951 respectively. The University started on its career as an examining body, but slowly it was transformed into a teaching University. In recent years it had expanded into Arts, Science, Medical and Engineering Faculties and has its own enclave in charming surroundings on the western bank of Dal Lake.

For providing medical relief to the masses, the government set up some more dispensaries. There was, however, a shortage of physicians and surgeons, and a number of students were given scholarships for studies in medicine at various Universities in India.

Constituent Assembly

But all these measures were taken by government which derived its powers from the Maharaja. Though it enjoyed the support and confidence of the main political organisation in the State, it was felt that the weighty questions which had meanwhile cropped up could not be decided by the National Conference without referring them to the people. In October 1950, therefore, the General Council of the Conference passed a resolution asking for elections to a Constituent Assembly for the purpose of giving to the State a Constitution and simultaneously functioning as its legislature. In May 1951, the Yuvaraj in the Capacity of the Regent, issued a proclamation convoking a Constituent Assembly on the basis of free adult franchise. The elections to the Constituent Assembly were accordingly held and the Assembly met for the first time in October 1951.

Constituent Assembly Elections

Foreign correspondents and observers flocked to the State to witness the elections to this important body. The elections were conducted by an Election Commissioner appointed by the Yuvaraj who worked as the Regent of the Maharaja. The constituencies were delimited on the basis of one member to 40,000 people. The franchise was based on universal adult suffrage and people were assured of a free and fair exercise of their vote.

All the 75 seats were won by the National Conference. There were only two contests in Jammu, which were also won by the National Conference. The total number of rejections was 14 and of withdrawals 11.

The Constituent Assembly had primarily been convened for three objects: 1. Framing a Constitution for the State and finalising administrative arrangements with the Centre; 2. Deciding the future of the ruling family; and 3. Passing a verdict on the land owners claim to compensation following the abolition of big landed estates.

Monarchical Rule Abolished

Regarding the last two items, the Constituent Assembly had no difficulty in coming to a quick decision. It forestalled the abolition of monarchical system of Government in other princely State in India. With the attainment of independence the institution of Indian Princes was becoming an anachronism and after acceding to the Indian Union, the princes by the force of public opinion, became constitutional heads of their respective States. In 1951, however, they still wielded influence and power and retained some vestige of dynastic rule. In Kashmir, the conditions were different. For 20 years the people had been agitating for a democratic form of administration and monarchy in any form was unacceptable to them. The Constituent Assembly, therefore, decided that the Head of the Jammu and Kashmir State, to be called the Sadar-i-Riyasat, be elected by the Legislative Assembly and hold office for a term of five years.

The Assembly was equally emphatic over the non-payment of compensation to landholders affected by the Abolition of Big Landed Estates Act. Since the State was not in a position to pay from its exchequer huge sums of money to landlords in compensation and since they had already got enough returns on capital investment and interest therefore, the assembly decided that no compensation need be paid to them. Cases of genuine hardship would, however, receive sympathetic consideration from the Government.

For framing a suitable Constitution the Assembly appointed several sub-committees. But since constitution making was a slow process, it was decided that the Constituent Assembly should convert itself into the Legislature of the State till the new constitution was adopted.

The framing of a constitution for the State brought to light the fissiparous tendencies encouraged by some of the leaders of the National Conference including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah himself. Originally all the Princely States had acceded to the Indian Union in the three subjects of defence, foreign relations and communications, retaining powers of internal rule in their hands. But with the rapid growth of political consciousness among their subjects, monarchy became anamolous in India and within the short span of three years all the States got merged and became after regional amalgamation, the Constituent States of the Union. Jammu and Kashmir State however, did not fuse with the Union but retained rights of autonomy, which was recognised by Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

Sheikh Abdullah had thus a free hand to conduct the internal administration of the State. But with the loss of revenue due to the invasion and with a rapid increase in expenditure to finance the numerous development projects, he was depending upon grants and subsidies from the Centre. At the same time he was drifting away from the rest of India.

In Jammu the opposition was spearheaded by the Praja Parishad, a party which became vocal from 1949. In the numerous speeches of Sheikh Abdullah against the Maharaja's rule, the Jammu Dogras came in for sharp denunciation. The net result of all this was that the Jammu masses began to get estranged from the policies of the National Conference led by leaders from Kashmir and it was as a direct result of that that the Praja Parishad gained popular support in Jammu. Deriving inspiration from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the Praja Parishad declared its opposition to a separate flag and constitution for Kashmir because these would encourage fissiparous tendencies by keeping alive a feeling of separatism. For the future safety and security of Jammu and Kashmir with which the safety and security of India was linked, it thought it essential that the state should be brought fully under the Constitution of India by repealing Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

A minor incident in connection with the hoisting of the Conference flag in a local college, led to a disturbance in Jammu as a result of which some Parishad leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Subsequently it transpired that these leaders had taken no active part in the demonstrations and through the intervention of the Indian States Minister, N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Sheikh Abdullah released them. But this 'interference' provoked the Sheikh to make a speech at Ranbirsinghpura on 10 April 1952, in which he criticised India for communalism and warned against applying the Indian Constitution to Kashmir in all respects.

The speech caused an uproar in the country and the subsequent reactions of the press in India set in motion a vicious circle which assumed sinister proportions at the passing of every day.

In the Valley there was popular resentment against the government due to the inefficient handling of the food problem. Unfortunately the failure of crops in 1949-50 and 1950-51 led to a grave crisis. The Government of India, however, promptly came to the rescue of Kashmir and despatched large quantities of rice and wheat to the

Valley. But the distributing agency — the Food Control Department — fell into the hands of some unscrupulous and greedy persons who sold a good portion of the grain into the black market. The food procurement drive added to the misery of the peasants who were forced to part with their stock of grain at nominal rates, while they had to purchase grain at exhorbitant prices to pay the *Mujawaza* (land tax in kind). The people's patience was exhausted and when the Food Minister, Mirza Afzal Beg, rose to address a meeting of the National Conference workers he was heckled and made to leave the conference room.

The working of the cooperative stores was also giving rise to discontent among the masses. All the essential commodities like cloth, sugar and salt were distributed by these stores, but according to the findings of a government committee of inquiry appointed in 1952-53, the cooperatives completely collapsed because of "corruption and malpractices" of their directors and employees.

Sheikh Abdullah and his adviser, Mirza Afzal Beg, in order to regain their hold on the masses of the Valley began to play hot and cold towards India. It was in this background that session of the Constituent Assembly was held at Jammu in the spring of 1952. It met to consider the reports of three sub-committees set up in the previous session. Mirza Afzal Beg announced that the Basic Principles Committee was of the opinion that the State should form a republic within the Republic of India. The Assembly adopted the principle of abolition of monarchy and of having an elected Head of the State.

Delhi Agreement

The Constitutional deadlock thus created was finally sought to be resolved by mutual negotiations between the Central and State Governments. The position of the State in the Union was settled in what is popularly termed as the 'Delhi Agreement' announced on 24 July 1952. India agreed to give a special position and status to Kashmir in the Constitution whereby complete internal autonomy was assured to the State. The hereditary ruler would be replaced by a Head of the State who would be elected for a term of five years. Fundamental rights that are guaranteed by the Indian Constitution were to apply to Kashmir, subject to the provision that they would not encroach upon the programme of land reform. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was to be limited, as regards Kashmir, to inter-State disputes, fundamental rights and to matters of defence,

foreign affairs and communications. The national flag of India was to be supreme. The emergency powers of the President of India were to apply in Kashmir only "at the request or with the concurrence of the Government of the State."

Sheikh Abdullah at once gave effect to the provisions of the agreement with regard to the Head of the State. On 12 November 1952, the Constituent Assembly in Srinagar formally adopted an amendment to the constitution replacing the Maharaja's rulership by that of an elected 'Head of the State' Sadr-i-Riyasat. Two days later the 21 year old Yuvaraj, the Prince-Regent, was elected to the office. His election was formally recognised by the President of India, and incidentally it brought to end the hereditary rule of the Dogra dynasty.

No further action was taken by the State government with regard to other provisions of the agreement particularly the transfer of control of the State telegraphs and telephone department, and the extension of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

The Parishad thus got a handle to launch an agitation. Wholesale arrests were made and in May 1953 the President of the Jana Sangh, Dr S.P. Mookerjee, demonstratively travelled to Jammu where he was arrested and detained in jail in Srinagar. The following month his death there under suspicious circumstances "raised a storm of indignation in India against the regime of Sheikh Abdullah."

Events in Ladakh had taken a turn similar to Jammu. The district, long neglected by the Dogras, was slowly rising from its political slumber. Kushak Bakula, the head Lama, voiced the feelings of the people of Ladakh when he declared that in the event of Kashmir drifting away from India, the Ladakhis would sever their connection with the State and merge with the Indian Union.

These developments, created a psychological crisis in the mind of Sheikh Abdullah. He had already given out his idea of the Valley of Kashmir remaining an independent and neutral State. In formulating this idea he was encouraged by several foreign individuals. "On top of these reports", writes Korbel, "came the highly inflammatory rumours that the United States was backing the idea of Kashmir independence and that Sheikh Abdullah had been encouraged in it when Adlai Stevenson had visited Srinagar in May,"[1] Pandit Nehru, however, declared later that "if there is a modicum of truth in them that is greatly exaggerated...I would say in the course of the last

1. *Danger in Kashmir*, p. 237.

few weeks, in the course of the last few months and some times more, hard cases of this type of interference have come before us — individual interference. It would not be correct to call it governmental interference, but individuals have not behaved properly, because again you must remember the basic fact that Kashmir is a highly strategic area."[2]

Change of Government

The political and economic situation in Kashmir was in the early months of 1953 passing through a severe crisis. The people in general and the National Conference in particular were astounded at the change of attitude of Sheikh Abdullah towards the position of the State in the Indian Union. The Majority of the Working Committee members headed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed were opposed to the attitude adopted by the Sheikh. The whole question was thoroughly discussed in a marathon session of the Working Committee extending to three weeks held in Srinagar in May. Sheikh Abdullah failed to convert the members to his point of view and a resolution endorsing the accession to India and supporting the Delhi Agreement was passed with a majority of 15 against four votes.

An open rift developed in the Cabinet also. Three of the five members differed on the measures taken by the government in ameliorating the economic condition of the people and the slow implementation of the provisions of the Delhi Agreement.

The final act was precipitated by the Sheikh's demand for the resignation of a member of his Cabinet, Mr Sham Lal Saraf, the Development Minister. In his replay, Mr Saraf refused to resign unless the whole Cabinet was dissolved and a new government formed. Finally on 7 August the three members, led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, accused Sheikh Abdullah in a memorandum of making arbitrary decisions, of being responsible for deterioration in the administration, despotism, inefficiency and wanton wastage of public resources. The memorandum informed Sheikh Abdullah that the Cabinet had lost the confidence of the people.

A copy of this memorandum was submitted to the Sadr-i-Riyasat, who suggested an emergency meeting of the Cabinet to be held under his presidentship wherein the differences would be discussed and a solution found to them. Sheikh Abdullah did not accept the suggestion

2. Speech in the Lok Sabha, 17 September 1952.

and in the afternoon of 8 August, left on a weekend holiday for Gulmarg.

Meanwhile the Sadr-i-Riyasat faced with a grave threat to the unity, prosperity and stability of the State, by a serious rift in the Cabinet, acted promptly, no doubt at the instance and with the support of the Central Government, and issued an order on 8 August, 1953 dismissing Sheikh Abdullah from the Prime Ministership of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and dissolving the Council of Ministers headed by him. On 9 August, he invited Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed to form a new government whose "continuance in office will depend upon its securing a vote of confidence from the Legislative Assembly during its coming session."

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed accepted the invitation and was sworn in on the same day as Prime Minister.

On 9 August, Sheikh Abdullah along with some of his confidents was arrested at Gulmarg and kept in detention at Udhampur in the Jammu Province.

The new Prime Minister immediately upon taking the oath of office broadcast his policy statement. He said that it had been a painful decision for them to part from their erstwhile colleagues, but in times of historic crisis when the fate of millions was at stake, personal relations and affections had to be subordinated to the paramount interests of the country. He narrated the course of events which led to the parting of the ways between them. "Recent developments have made it abundantly clear to all of us that a betrayal of the country's interests and the traditions of our democratic struggle was in the offing, which would inevitably have led to grave consequences. None of us could afford to watch complacently the repetition of the events which uprooted the lives of millons of people in the Indian subcontinent in 1947." The slogan of `independence' was highly misleading and there "should be no doubt as to the motive for sponsoring such an idea in the context of international developments in Asia and other parts of the world."

"An 'independent' Kashmir," continued Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, "under the influence of an imperialist power will be a grave threat to freedom and independence of Indian and Pakistani people. In view of the geographical position of the State, such independence is bound to involve us in a bitter and violent international controversy and another Korea may be staged here as a result of the armed

conflict between interested powers."

He then gave an objective survey of the State's accession to India which gave a position of security and honourable status to a small State like Kashmir "with its poor resources, backward economy and complex geographical situation." He declared: "the secular and democratic traditions and ideology of our national movement have established indissoluble links with the democratic movement in India." He then mentioned that the key to the crisis lay in the deep-rooted economic discontent of the masses of the State. During the preceding five years "serious shortcomings in the handling of the economy of our State have led to some violent dislocations in a number of trades and professions resulting in unemployment, economic maladjustments and a heavy fall in the living standard of the people."

He then announced some ameliorative measures to ease the economic distress. The *Mujawaza* levee was abolished forthwith; the price of paddy reduced by 2 rupees per *Kharwar* (about 80 kilograms); the cooperatives were to be reorganised and the government would allow reopening of competitive retail shops; cooperative debts would be stayed in cases of genuine distress. His policy would be to provide employment to villagers throughout the year, by developing cottage industries and a Planning Commission would be appointed to devise ways and means for raising the productivity of the State.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed announced the abolition of educational fees in schools and colleges from the primary to the postgraduate classes. "Every effort." he stated, "will be made to develop our regional language, particularly Kashmiri, Dogri and Ladakhi." He announced that the State emporia would be reorganised and cheap credit made available to handicraftsmen. Better amenities would be provided for tourists and the permit system would be abolished.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed

Born in 1907, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, the new Prime Minister, started his career as a school teacher and was later employed by the All-India Spinners Association. Here he had an opportunity of coming in contact with some of the close associates of Mahatma Gandhi, and having a thorough understanding of the Swadeshi Movement. He entered politics in the early twenties when he was arrested for taking part in the movement boycotting foreign goods. In 1931 he threw

himself wholeheartedly into the national struggle and had to suffer in the repression which followed. It was due to his organising abilities that the National Conference developed into a well-knit, extensive and widespread organisation in the State. During the 1946 "Quit Kashmir" movement he went to India to work for and direct the movement from there. He mobilised opinion in the country in support of the movement and when finally Kak had to go, he returned to Kashmir in triumph.

When the Pakistan inspired invasion took place, Bakshi rose to the occasion and by his untiring efforts organised a people's resistance against the raiders. By his wise handling of the situation following the Maharaja's departure for Jammu, he prevented panic spreading among the people and the way he kept the whole Valley under control is a tribute to his popularity and his genius for organisation.

In the first popular government formed by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed occupied the position of Deputy Prime Ministership. His entire attention was devoted to the organisation of the Militia, the Transport Department and the development of cottage and other industries.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed gained immense popularity as Deputy Prime Minister with his easy accessibility. A man of the people, Bakshi was known for his rugged common sense and quick decision.

As was to be expected there were outbursts of anger among the people in the Valley following Sheikh Abdullah's arrest. But very soon the situation came under control and with the quick realisation of the pernicious implications of the 'independent Valley' idea by the general mass of the people, life returned to normal throughout the State. In fact in September a convention of the workers and representatives of the National Conference from all the local committees in the State was held in Srinagar, which gave an overwhelming vote of confidence to the Bakshi government and approved the action taken by him with regard to Sheikh Abdullah and his personal followers.

In Pakistan there were demonstrations of anger against the Government of India for having, they alleged, managed to put Sheikh Abdullah behind the bars. How the Sheikh turned for them from a quisling to a patriot was difficult to say. The Prime Minister of Pakistan at once rushed to New Delhi and had a conference with Pandit Nehru, after which a joint communique was issued, affirming the

settlement of the Kashmir situation by holding a plebiscite after the preliminary steps for preparing the ground were taken by a committee of officials from both the countries. As already mentioned the whole scheme was sabotaged by the Pakistan press who raised a storm of vituperation against India and its leaders as soon as the joint communique was published.

Accession to India Confirmed

When the Constituent Assembly met in Jammu in February 1954, it passed a unanimous vote of confidence in Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and his Cabinet. On 6 February, the Constituent Assembly confirmed the State's accession to India. The reports of the Basic Principles Committee and the Committee on Fundamental Rights were also adopted the same day. The Basic Principles Committee report stated that "in order to enable the Centre to discharge its responsibilities, which devolve upon it under the Constitution, those provisions of the Constitution of India which may be necessary for this purpose should be made applicable to the State in an appropriate manner. While preserving the autonomy of the State, all obligations which flow from the act of accession and also its elaborations as contained in the Delhi Agreement should find appropriate place in the Constitution."

As a practical consequence of the report, the customs barrier was removed on 13 April, and thereby Kashmir became economically an integral part of India. The Centre Compensated the loss of revenue to the State by a subsidy amounting to 20 million rupees a year.

On 14 May 1954, a Presidential Order was issued incorporating the recommendations of the State Constituent Assembly in the Indian Constitution.

The Drafting Committee presented the draft of the new Constitution to the Assembly on 10 October 1956. It was unanimously adopted on 17 November 1956, and came formally into effect on 26 January 1957, the seventh birthday of the Republic of India.

In regard to all basic matters, the State Constitution is identical with the Indian Constitution. It provides for a parliamentary form of government, a legislature, adult suffrage, an independent judiciary, a Public Service Commission, and other democratic institutions. In the matter of Fundamental Rights, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the Authority of the Controller and Auditor-General of India, the State is like any other in the Union. The State's official language

is Urdu which is one of the recognised Indian languages in the Constitution. The Directive Principles of the state policy are also modelled after those of the Constitution of India. The State is to establish and preserve a socialistic order of society. The Constitution has a firm secular basis.

Later various measures were taken to consolidate the State's ties with the rest of the country. The State entered into financial arrangements with the Union Government in 1957 which brought it on par with other States in respect of financial matters including proportionate allocation of funds from the Centre.

A State cadre of IAS and IPS officers has been created and these officers are trained through the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Accounts and Audit Department of the State is now under the Auditor-General of India whose nominee runs the Department in the State and accounts of revenue and expenditure are subjected to audit and scrutiny of the Auditor-General.

In 1959, the State Assembly unanimously decided to seek amendment of the State's Constitution to provide for the extension of the jurisdiction of the Election Commission of India and the Supreme Court over the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The recommendations of the State Legislature have been incorporated in the Indian Constitution through a Presidential Order issued on 26 January 1960.

The Legislative Assembly passed an Act authorising the Government to permit those non-State subjects to purchase land and other immovable property in Jammu and Kashmir who intend to set up industries in the State.

The Constituent Assembly passed in the capacity of the Provisional Legislature, the People's Representation Act providing for delimitation of Constituencies for the purpose of election to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. It also made provision for free and fair conduct of the elections. In pursuance of this Act, the Sadr-i-Riyasat issued an order of 11 February 1957, for the delimitation of constituencies. The total number of constituencies in the State is 75, out of which there are 30 in Jammu Province and 45 in Kashmir Province including Ladakh and Kargil.

Elections and After

Elections to the new Legislature were held in March 1957, and once again the National Conference candidates swept the polls

winning 68 out of 75 seats. The Praja Parishad won 5, Harijan Mandal one and Independents one.

The second elections to the State Assembly were held in 1962 along with the General Elections in India, under the control and the supervision of the Election Commissioner. During the previous five year of the Bakshi government there had been an all-round progress in the State and it was but natural that the electorate should return the nominees of the National Conference to the Legislature. Out of 75 seats the National Conference secured 70.

All-Round Progress

During a decade of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's dynamic Chief Ministership, the State made phenomenal progress on the economic and social front. An expenditure of 11 crore rupees was incurred on the implementation of the First Five Year Plan (1951-56). In the Second Plan period the State spent over 26 crores. The Third Plan had an outlay of 75 crore rupees.

In agriculture, food production increased considerably. The installed capacity of power which was only about 4,000 KW before the implementation of the Plans increased to over 24,000 KW. Side by side with the development of cottage industries, new factories sprang up. The labour force increased from 6,000 in 1952 to 10,000 in 1961. The per capita income which was 188 rupees in 1950-51 went up to 237 rupees in 1958-59. In the field of social services, the State government achieved notable success. There was now an engineering college, a medical college, two agricultural colleges, two polytechnics, and host of such institutions. Similarly in health services the State had 16 hospitals as against six in 1951-52. The number of dispensaries increased by three times the number a decade ago. A network of roads connected out-of-the-way towns and villages and opened new markets for their produce. The tourist traffic increased five times, thanks to the numerous facilities offered to the tourists in the shape of tourist huts, hotels. cheap transport and other amenities. Some heavy industries were established, particularly the cement factory at Wuyan, 12 miles to the south-east of Srinagar. Industrialists from the rest of India became increasingly interested in exploring the possibilities of setting up factories in the State in view of the availability of extensive raw materials.

While the people of the State were struggling to come out of the

trough of age-old ignorance and want, Pakistani agents and saboteurs were surreptitiously establishing contacts with the disgruntled elements in the State. The vigilant eye of Bakshi, however, prevented them from coming out into the open to play their nefarious game.

Bakshi Quits

Unfortunately Bakshi decided to lay down the reins of government in pursuance of what is known as Kamaraj Plan. Jawaharlal Nehru had after the Chinese aggression, come to the conclusion that the masses in India had not yet become conscious of their rights and obligations and it was, therefore, imperative to involve the youth in this national task. He thought that it was now time for elder statesmen and leaders to make room for the younger generation.

Accordingly several top-ranking Congressmen offered to step down and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, an ardent admirer of Nehru, was one of the first to accept the Plan. He offered his resignation which was reluctantly accepted by Nehru in August 1963. There was at once a scramble for power among the many aspirants from the National Conference. Ultimately a lesser known man, Mr Shams-ud-din was elected to succeed Bakshi as a compromise measure.

This was the opportunity which the pro-Pakistan elements, backed by infiltrators and secret agents, were waiting for. Having failed to enlist the support and sympathy of the Muslim masses to rise in revolt against the State government, they resorted to a mean strategem to fan up communal passions on a mass scale.

Theft and Restoration of the Holy Relic

On 27 December 1963, the Holy Relic enshrined at the Hazaratbal mosque was stolen after breaking open the special room where it was lodged. The news of the disappearance of the Holy Relic spread like wildfire and caused widespread dismay and anger among the people. That it was a pre-planned conspiracy is apparent from the fact that within minutes of the occurrence, thousands of black flags were thrust into the hands of the people who came out *en masse* into the streets and open spaces of Srinagar in defiance of the inclement weather and the rigours of biting cold and frost. Knowing well the deep veneration in which the Holy Relic was held by the Kashmiri Muslims from generations, the conspirators believed that their wrath at its disappearance would be directed against the government as well

as against the Hindu community. But as usual the people, though deeply grieved, maintained communal amity and prayed for the recovery of the sacred Relic by holding mass congregations all over the Valley.

The Government of India took up the investigation of the theft and after strenuous efforts were about to track down the conspirators when the latter stealthily restored the Holy Relic to its place at the Hazaratbal mosque. This was on 4 January 1964. There were widespread rejoicings all over the Valley. The State and Central governments heaved a sigh of relief.

Sadiq Comes to Power

The event had, however, revealed the shortcomings of the Shams-ud-din ministry. With the active help and advice of the Central Government, the National Conference legislators elected Mr G.M. Sadiq as their leader who assumed the office of Chief Minister in February 1964.

With every change in government, the State in one way or the other came, or was induced to come, nearer to the Centre. The latest was the change in the designation of the head of the State as Governor. He was now to be appointed by the President and not elected by the State legislature as previously.

Mr Sadiq who had played a prominent role in the freedom struggle under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah and later held ministerial posts in his and Bakshi's governments, began his administration with the announcement of the liberalisation and normalisation of government policy towards all elements in the State's body-politic. This, coupled with his weak and wavering administration, gave an opportunity to various elements inimical to India to create trouble. Large-scale student demonstrations were held in Srinagar and it was seized upon by Pakistan to bring again the Kashmir question before the Security Council in order to malign India at the world forum.

Another important decision Mr Sadiq took was the withdrawal of all charges of conspiracy against Sheikh Abdullah and others. The Sheikh had been under detention from August 1953 to April 1964 with a brief spell of freedom from January to April in 1958. To keep him indefinitely under detention without trial went against the letter and spirit of the Indian Constitution. The Government of India was

assured by the minions of the Intelligence Bureau that a case could be framed against the Sheikh for conspiring to overthrow the State government by violent means. The case was launched against Sheikh Abdullah and others in 1958.

The case lingered on for six years and yet the end was not in sight. Sensing the resentment over the lengthy proceedings of the case by the people of Kashmir and rest of India, Mr Sadiq took the initiative and ordered the immediate release of the Sheikh.

The Sheikh was released in April 1964 and received a tumultuous welcome in the Valley. He was invited by Jawaharlal Nehru to Delhi and was cordially received by him. Later he visited Pakistan where he saw for himself the miserable conditions under which the people in so-called "Azad Kashmir" passed their days. He cut short his tour and dashed back to New Delhi to attend the funeral of Jawaharlal Nehru who passed away on 27 May 1964.

Nehru's death was believed by the military junta which ruled Pakistan to be the forerunner of the dismemberment of India into linguistic and other zones. Their war preparations assumed sinister proportions. In Kashmir particularly, they intensified their subversive activities which culminated in the wholesale infiltration of armed bands in August 1965. This resulted in the 22-day Indo-Pakistan war.

The after-effects of the war and the internal bickerings in the Sadiq ministry slowed down considerably the tempo of progress in the State. Hence during the June 1967 Middle East war between Israel and UAR, there were widespread riots in Srinagar and a church was burnt down by the angry Muslim mob.

Kashmiri Pandits' Agitation

Not only was the Muslim element dissatisfied with the slow pace of economic progress, the Hindus of Kashmir popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits, who had been discriminated against all these years in the matter of recruitment to government service, admission of their children to technical and vocational schools and colleges and in various other fields, were resentful of the State government and to a great extent of the Central Government too, who, they believed, were condoning these acts of discrimination against them.

Their pent-up resentment was provoked into a massive agitation in September 1967 by what is known as Parmeswari conversion case. A young Kashmiri Pandit girl named Parmeswari, working in a co-

operative store, was alleged to have been induced by a Muslim colleague to marry him after conversion to Islam. The Pandit community was infuriated at the way the police handled the case and held a meeting of protest. At once the Pakistani agents worked up feelings among the Muslims and a few communal clashes took place in which some lives were lost.

There was spontaneous outburst of anger and resentment in the Pandit community, normally sober, peace-loving and docile. That they rose as one to offer satyagraha shows their deep resentment of the way they had been treated for quite some time by the State Government. They abstained from attending their offices, schools, banking establishments and shops. they resumed work only when the representatives of the State and Central Governments assured them that their grievances would be sympathetically looked into and redressed.

This small community has rendered valuable services to the State all through its long history. Being pioneers in education and other fine arts, they passed on the torch of learning to other communities and made them fit to take up the duties normally performed by them. Many of their youth have come out of the State to work in the rest of the country and even abroad and here also they are making a mark.

Differences among the members of the council of ministers came to a head with the resignation of Syed Mir Qasim and some of his colleagues. Meanwhile the Indian National Congress originally activated in Kashmir by Mr Mohammad Shafi Qureshi and his young band of nationalist workers, was rapidly replacing the National Conference. The two organisations had fundamentally identical aims and objects. Syed Mir Qasim as president of the Congress party in the State was responsible in establishing it firmly among the masses. Later Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed too advised the National Conference to officially merge with the Congress which gave further strength to the party.

While this transformation of the main political party was in progress, Mr Sadiq breathed his last on December 12, 1971. He had been ailing for quite some time and his death at a time when the country was in the midst of a war with Pakistan was widely mourned.

Syed Mir Qasim

Syed Mir Qasim who had rejoined the Sadiq ministry was called

upon to assume office as Chief Minister of the State. He immediately rose to the occasion and applied his energies to the successful prosecution of the war.

Syed Mir Qasim (b. 1921) came from an ancient family of Doru in the south of Kashmir valley. Educated in Srinagar, he took an active part in the student movement and was arrested during the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation in 1946. He held cabinet posts in Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's and in Mr Sadiq's ministries. He is known for his dynamism, intelligence and broad outlook on social and political problems. On his assumption of office as Chief Minister, he enunciated the outlines of his programme for economic and social progress of the State.

The fourth elections to the State legislature held in March 1972, returned the Congress party to power. Almost all the political parties in Kashmir took part in these elections. Of the 74 seats, the Congress won 57, the Jamait Islami five, the Jana Sangh three and Independents nine.

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THE TWO WARS WITH PAKISTAN

The refusal by India to subscribe to the theory that religion can be the sole basis of nationality, brought forth in Pakistan a reaction in the form of a deep-seated hatred towards India. The common thread running through the policies followed by the several prime ministers, foreign ministers, presidents and martial law administrators of Pakistan since its inception, has been hostility towards India. It found expression in their oft-repeated cry for *Jehad* or holy war. It explains the shifting home and foreign policies followed by Pakistan since its birth and it is the basic reason for her wholesale preparations for an all-out war against India. Whereas the Indian leaders made the banishment of hunger and want from their country the guiding policy of their government, the Pakistan rulers followed a comparatively easy course of creating a war psychosis among their people.

In furtherance of their set policy they embarked upon the ruinous course of arming Pakistan to the teeth. To get an edge on the armed forces of India, they secured weapons of the latest type by entering into military alliances with various countries in complete disregard of the best interests of their people or the people of the Indian sub-continent.

Pakistan's Military Alliances

Pakistan's foreign policy was governed by the same animus. She aligned herself with contending power blocs, often discarding one for the other to suit her anti-India policy. She did not hesitate even to allow foreign military and air bases being set up in Pakistan or in the Indian territory under their occupation in Kashmir.

In her search for allies, Pakistan was helped by the new alignments sought to be formed by the Western bloc for their 'cold war'

strategy. One of these 'alliances' was the South East Asia Collective Defence Treaty (SEATO) which came into being on 8 September 1954. Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the UK and USA signed at Manila a pact of 'continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid' which established a collective defence system in South-East Asia.

Pakistan's membership of the SEATO brought the cold war to the doorsteps of India, thus disturbing the area of peace which she wanted to build in Asia. It went counter to Nehru's abhorrence of military alignments and his neutralism born of a deep conviction that a race for armaments was most likely to result in a third war.

Her next move was to attempt to form a bloc on the basis of anti communism. This was the beginning of the notorious Baghdad Pact of 1955. Later on it came to be known as CENTO. Bilateral defence agreements between the USA and Turkey, Iran and Pakistan were signed in Ankara on 5 March 1959.

US Arms Aid

Along with the military pacts with the Western powers, Pakistan endeavoured to secure from the US as much military aid as it possibly could to bring its armed potential on par with India and even more. The first indication of such an aid being given by the USA came in November 1953, when Mr Ghulam Mohammad, the then Pakistan Governor-General was in America for 'urgent medical treatment'. General Ayub Khan, who was then the commander-in-chief of the Pakistan army, had been in Washington a few days earlier. On 25 February 1954, President Eisenhower announced that the United States Government would comply with Pakistan's request for arms aid. But at the same time he assured India that "this step does not in any way affect the friendship we feel for India......"

Nehru strongly criticised US military aid to Pakistan and described it as a form of intervention in Indo-Pakistan relations. He was assured by high-ranking US officials that the arms supplied to Pakistan would under no circumstances be used against India.

Pakistan on the contrary had a different opinion. In October 1956, for instance, the then Pakistan Foreign Minister, Sir Feroz Khan Noon, said: "enmity of a powerful neighbouring country had obliged Pakistan to enter into defence alliances to preserve her freedom." At last, the fears of India came true. President Ayub Khan declared

in January 1962, that Pakistan would use all the weapons in her possession against India in case she was attacked and would not want to take advice from her allies.

The motivation of Pakistan in entering into military alliances with Western powers had little to do with anti-communism and everything with India. A convincing proof of this was the declaration by their new-found friend — Premier Chou En-lai. In a press statement in 1963 he said that Pakistan had assured him in 1954 that she had joined the Western Military Alliances only to gain political and military ascendency over India and that "Pakistan had no other motivation in joining the pacts." A practical demonstration of it was given when, throwing to the wind all undertakings and commitments under the various Pacts, Pakistan began to woo the very power against whom the aid had been secured — China. Pakistani leaders following the age-old saying 'your enemy's enemy is your friend', suddenly developed warm feelings of friendship for China when the latter country was posing a threat to India's security. Their growing ties with China culminated in an illegal agreement on Kashmir's northern border, whereby Pakistan gave away to China a part of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir State which was under Pakistan's occupation.

A Formidable Military Machine

In 1958 Pakistan came under the military dictatorship of the former Commander-in-Chief, General Ayub Khan. By 1964 America's 1.5 billion dollar worth of military hardware supplied to Pakistan enabled her forces to bear superior fire-power and sophisticated armour both on the ground and in the air. For, Pakistan's military rulers had seen to it that the fighting equipment they secured from the Western powers was of the latest type. To match the massive arms supplies, Pakistan expanded her armed forces to gigantic proportions considering her size and resources. More than three-fourths of her annual budget was spent on her armed forces.

According to one reliable estimate she had an armed force of 253,000 which cost it 269 million dollars annually. Para-military forces were estimated to be of a total strength of 65,000. Over and above this was the light-armed militia whose strength could be over 200,000.

The Pakistan Air Force had four squadrons of Sabre-jets and four squadrons of B-57B Canberras. In addition, it had one squadron of F-104G Starfighters and another was being formed. Besides these it

had RT-33As for tactical reconnaissance and some T-33 and T-37B jet trainers. It had also a transport force of C-130B Hercules. In all there were 280 aircraft manned by a force of 17,000 to 20,000 men.

The Pakistan Navy had a total strength of 8,250 personnel, with a light cruiser for training cadets, five destroyers, two frigates, eight mine-sweepers, and ten other ships. There was also a coastguard force of 1,500 men. Besides, the Pakistan Navy had recently acquired a submarine for training purposes.

To match this ultra-modern land and air force equipment, Pakistan air-bases were built on the latest plans with sophisticated radar screens and underground hangars and other necessary installations. The runways were built of reinforced concrete to make them shell-proof. As if this was not enough, Pakistan had built complicated defence lines all over its borders with India. Besides the Ichhogil canal, which served as the outer defence line of Lahore against an armoured thrust, and was fitted with concrete pillboxes, the defences included hidden dug-outs, underground fortresses and communication tunnels. Nearly all able-bodied men and, in some cases, even women on the borders were given training in rifle shooting, throwing hand-grenades and operating radio transmitters and other signal equipment.

And to reinforce this formidable war machine, Pakistan had given intensive training to underground and guerrilla forces for subversion and sabotage across the cease-fire line in Kashmir and the international border with India.

Attack on Kutch

Having perfected her war machine to the last detail and secured assurances for an all-out support from China, Pakistan embarked upon the final adventure. There were several factors which she considered to be in her favour.

With the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1964, the world in general and Pakistan and her allies in particular, had expected dismemberment of the Indian Union into various racial and communal groups. They were confident that at least in the case of Kashmir, the new Government in India would yield ground. Nehru, they thought, had refused to hand over Kashmir on a silver platter to Pakistan because of his personal attachment to the State. President Ayub had expressed several times the opinion that Kashmir was of no

value to India, and it was only their false prestige which prevented the Indian leaders to give it up. Sheikh Abdullah's release and his anti-India statements in the Middle East countries and in London, they thought, were a pointer to how India proposed to deal with this vexed question now.

Then there was the acute shortage of food and foreign exchange plaguing India. To add to the worries and difficulties of the Union Government, there had cropped up the serious language controversy. The fissiparous tendencies had convinced the rulers of Pakistan that the time was ripe for a final blow to complete the process of disintegration in India.

And finally they struck at the time and on the ground of their choice. The time was the spring of 1965 and the ground the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. In the early hours of 9 April, the Indian border post of Sardar in Kutch was attacked with heavy mortar and medium machine-gun fire. This was followed by artillery fire from 25-pounder guns under cover of which two battalions of the Pakistan regular army advanced towards the post. Thereupon India took defensive action and the Chief of the Army Staff was instructed to take over operational control of the border and the army units moved into Vigokot the same evening. Indian units reoccupied the Sardar Post on 10 April after throwing back the Pakistan army battalions.

Pakistan concentrated further armed forces on the border behind its troops inside Indian territory. On the morning of 24 April, she launched an attack with heavy artillery in brigade strength on our post west of Chhad Bet. On 26 April,her armed forces, again with tanks and armoured vehicles, attacked our border post at Biar Bet. These attacks continued for a number of days.

Pakistan justified these attacks, in the Chinese fashion, as measures to regain control of her border in this sector which she alleged had been violated by Indian forces. But these attacks for creating an imaginary border dispute were in fact just a probing action to test India's will to resist and the reaction of her Western allies with regard to the use of the military equipment supplied to her under various pacts.

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri sounded a note of warning to the nation and declared that "our neighbours, both China and Pakistan, had chosen to adopt an attitude of aggressive hostility towards India. They seem to have joined hands to act in concert against us."

But India had a living and vital stake in peace because "we want

to concentrate attention on improving the living standards of millions of our people. In the utilization of our limited resources, we have always given primacy to plans and projects for economic development."

Negotiations for a peaceful settlement were carried on with the good offices of the British Prime Minister, Mr Wilson. In the meantime Shastri and Ayub Khan met informally in London on the occasion of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference on 17 June 1965. Prolonged negotiation resulted in a tentative accord on the broad principles of an immediate cease-fire and of the Kutch border demarcation by negotiation. Finally an agreement was signed between the two governments on 30 June for an immediate cease-fire and restoration of *status quo ante* in the area of the Gujarat-Pakistan border. The agreement provided plans for "determination and demarcation of the border in that area after the *status quo ante* had been restored."

But even before the proverbial ink was dry on the agreement, Pakistan was planning a more dangerous and massive aggression in Kashmir.

The 22-Day War of 1965

Borrowing the technique of guerrilla warfare perfected by her new-founded friend, Mao Tse-tung, Pakistan "put the fish in the water to test the temperature". On 5 August 1965, several thousand fully armed Pakistan soldiers in civilian clothes slipped across the 470-mile-long cease-fire line into Jammu and Kashmir. They came, in twos and threes, through the many gaps and trails that criss-cross the mountainous terrain. Dense woods, ravines and gorges provided the infiltrators excellent cover.

Having crossed the cease-fire line surreptitiously, the infiltrators met at appointed places to regroup themselves into larger parties. They carried a variety of weapons, cooked food, dry rations, medical supplies, transistor radios and Indian currency notes. They were equipped with arms and ammunition supplied by the Pakistan Government. They were organised into eight 'Forces' each composed of six companies of 110 men. In most cases the companies were commanded by regular Pakistan Army officers of the rank of Major while the platoon commanders were either junior commissioned officers or senior non-commissioned officers.

The tasks allotted to the infiltrators were: destruction of bridges; disruption of lines of communication ; raiding of Indian army convoys, headquarters, supply dumps, police stations and important installations; inflicting casualties on troops, civilian officials and VIPs. The raiders banked on getting local support, failing which they were instructed to terrorise the local population by setting fire to their houses and property.

Kashmir Answers Pakistan

The people of Jammu and Kashmir, however saw through the game early. They gave the lie to the lurid accounts of "popular uprising" put out by the Pakistan radio and press, by cooperating with the authorities and giving valuable information which helped the security forces to trace and round up the infiltrators. In some cases the villagers captured the infiltrators themselves and handed them over to the police.

It must have been a great disappointment for Pakistan indeed. For, they had worked all these years to sow seeds of disaffection among the people of the State and day in and day out invoked religion to wean them away from opposition to the so-called two nation theory. The days of August were full of instances of close cooperation between the army and the people of Kashmir in locating the raiders and taking them into custody. Thanks to their efforts, the infiltrators were on the run after only a few days. In their rage they indulged in acts of loot and arson to sustain themselves.

While the people were busy tracking down and mopping up the infiltrators, India's armed contingents had fanned out to guard important points of entry into the country. Wherever necessary, they had taken position on strategic points commanding the infiltrators' lines of communication and reinforcement.

Almost within a week of their crossing the cease-fire line, the first 3,000 to 5,000 infiltrators were liquidated by the Indian security forces with the cooperation of the local people. Some were killed and wounded, some taken prisoner and the rest had to flee to ravines and jungles where they passed their helpless days without food and shelter. Ultimately they found their way back across the cease-fire line through unfrequented paths. But in their first rush and before the security forces could be alerted, several groups of infiltrators had sneaked into the interior of the Valley and had even reached

the suburbs of Srinagar. Earlier, another group penetrated 42 miles into the Valley and reached the Badgam town where finding the people's attitude hostile to them, they set fire to two high schools. Another group infiltrating from the Tithwal sector reached Kupwara some 40 miles inside of the cease-fire line in the north of the Valley.

But the people of Kashmir, undaunted by the atrocities committed against them by the infiltrators, presented an impregnable front of communal harmony and held the Pakistani invaders at bay. The infiltrators became desperate and were hunted men rather than guerrillas. Far from finding a place in the homes and hearts of the local people as they had counted upon doing, they had to take cover in forests and ravines from where they were ferreted out.

But the operation was still continued by Pakistan. A fresh wave of guerrillas was sent across the cease-fire line under cover of artillery fire from Pakistan posts. All over the 470-mile-long cease-fire line, they succeeded in eluding the security forces and indulging in acts of sabotage and arson in the Valley. Their bases of supply and infiltration were at strategic points located on the Pakistan side of the cease-fire line.

The Government of India approached the UN observer Group to prevent these incursions by the Pakistani armed personnel in civilian clothes. But they were helpless. As the UN Secretary General reported to the Security Council (4 September) he had been unable "to obtain any assurance from Pakistan that the cease-fire agreement and the cease-fire line in Kashmir would be respected henceforth or that efforts would be exerted to restore conditions to normal along the line."

India Takes Action

The Indian army had, under these circumstances, no other choice left except to take action to plug the entry routes used by Pakistani raiders for infiltrating into the Jammu and Kashmir State. On 24 August, the Indian forces crossed the cease-fire line in the Tithwal sector and occupied the Pir Sahiba post, 9,000 feet high. It was over this sector that the infiltrators entered the Valley in strength and fanned out to Kupwara and Gurais. By 13 September, the Indian forces were in control of the strategic Muzaffarabad-Kel road, the supply line to the infiltrators operating from the Gilgit sector.

Another crossing, this time in the Uri sector, was made on 26 August.

It was dare-devil operation conducted by a young officer, Major Ranjit Singh Dayal and his hundred men. The operation was quick, efficient and successful. Within two days they captured one after another the strategic posts of Sankh, Burjipathri, Kuthnar-ki-gali and finally the 13,200-foot high Bedore, nine miles south-east of Uri. The objective was Haji Pir pass, the strategic gateway to the 200-square mile 'bulge' in the cease-fire line. Despite heavy odds they reached a bund near the Haji Pir pass on the morning of 28th. Leaving some men behind to keep the enemy engaged, Dayal climbed another hill feature and from there rolled down and stormed the enemy position at the pass. The Pakistanis fled in confusion, leaving their guns behind. By 10.30 am the Indian security forces were in complete control of the pass.

The capture of the Haji Pir pass was only a prelude to the operations to link up Uri and Poonch. The linking up was completed on 10 September 1965. In these operations the Indian forces had to clear more than 30 posts of the Pakistanis. It was a success which they could be proud of.

Pakistan had now discovered to her bitter cost and humiliation that Kashmir was not "ripe for revolution", that the vast majority of people had openly dissociated themselves from the new Pakistan conspiracy and were fully cooperating with the Indian army and police in rounding up the infiltrators. There were now only two alternatives before the rulers of Pakistan to follow. Either they had to completely write off the guerrillas and admit the failure of the operation, or to commit their country to an all-out war with India. As was to be expected from a military dictatorship, they chose the latter course.

A Massive Assault

On 1 September 1965, Pakistan launched a carefully planned offensive at a strategically sensitive point across the border in the Chhamb sector of Jammu. The attack began with a thunderous artillery barrage to soften up the Indian defence at Burejal near the village of Chhamb. As the sun rose a little higher in the horizon, the massive attack developed. Over the arid plains came a hundred tanks, and in the dust cloud behind the lumbering steel fortresses followed a full brigade of Pakistani infantrymen. The offensive was launched across the international border and over the cease-fire line in an arc running north to the village of Dewa.

In the face of this massive attack, the Indian troops fell back in a series of planned withdrawals to hold defensive positions behind Chhamb and along the shallow Munawwar-Tawi. By evening the advance of Pakistani armoured drive to Akhnoor had been temporarily halted.

Pakistan had chosen a favourable and a very crucial point for its major attack on India. Situated at the trijunction of the cease-fire line and the international border between Pakistan and India in Jammu, Chhamb commands a strategic position. The country around is flat and suitable for deployment of tanks. On the other hand, India had only a strip of plain land to defend, with hills in the background where deployment of armour was not only of doubtful utility but hazardous too.

The Sinister Designs

As the Pakistani initiative developed, their objective became clearer. It was not only to seize Akhnoor and its vital bridge over the Chenab, but to envelop Jammu city as well. Akhnoor would have given them the control over the line of communication of the India armed forces in the Naushera-Rajauri-Poonch sector and the capture of Jammu, possibly through a strike from Sialkot, the control of the lifeline from Pathankot was probably to be the target of another thrust from Pasrur-Narowal over the Dera Baba Nanak bridge across the Ravi, smashing Gurdaspur on the way. Thus the control of the vital road link between Kashmir and the rest of India was to be wrested from India. This would isolate her troops in the State along the cease-fire line with Pakistan as well as those guarding the Sino-Indian border in Ladakh. The aim was the destruction of a sizeable section of the Indian army, and with that accomplished, to humiliate India and challenge her security. The shock of such a military disaster would break the Indian will to resist and Kashmir would fall like a ripe plum into Pakistan's mouth.

To win a quick decision, Pakistan increased the tempo of the offensive. On 3 September, their Pattons began a fresh advance and their aircraft heavily bombed Jaurian. The Indian planes, however, worsted them both in the air battles and in their effective cover to their land forces. There was renewed attack on the morning of 4 September. They crossed the shallow Munawwar Tawi. Indians were forced to take up positions on the high ground this side of the river. From there they inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, and

regrouped quickly for a counter-attack.

The counter-attack developed on the morning of 5 September, east of Jaurian, with supporting air cover. The enemy were driven back across the Munawwar Tawi.

There was a widespread resentment throughout India at the latest aggression committed by Pakistan. The Indian people rose as one man with a will to resist and meet the Pakistan challenge. This was the first disappointment for Pakistan rulers who had banked upon an immediate disruption of the Indian Union.

The story of the defence of the Chammb-Jaurian area can be written in letters of gold. Realising that this was a question of India's survival as a nation, the men and officers of the Indian army and airforce threw themselves into the battle with epic daring. But their daring and sacrifice could not overcome the overwhelmingly adverse factors of terrain and Pakistan's superior armour. Many perished, and every moment the threat to India grew more menacing. The pressure needed to be slackened and for this Indian army command had to wrest the initiative from Pakistan as quickly as possible.

The Indian Rebuff

So at dawn on 6 September, Indian army units crossed the Punjab border in the Lahore sector. The Indian air force simultaneously made tactical strikes against a number of military targets.

The attack was mounted in three prongs and spread over a 30-mile front; along the Grand Trunk Road from Wagah to Dograi, on the Khalra-Burki axis; and along the Khemkaran-Kasur axis. Further north, units of the Indian army flung the Pakistanis over the Ravi across Dera Baba Nanak Bridge. The bridge was blown up by the enemy the following day, thus putting an end to any serious threat of a Pakistani drive in the reverse direction.

By the very first evening, leading elements of the Indian forces reached and even crossed the Ichhogil canal but were unable to consolidate these bridgeheads in the face of fierce counter-attacks. But India had already achieved its prime objective. Enemy pressure on Akhnoor was immediately relieved and Pakistan promptly disengaged the bulk of its remaining armour in this sector and pulled it back to Sialkot-Pasrur awaiting the development of the Indian initiative.

On 7 September, units of the Indian forces crossed the Jammu-Pakistan border over a broad front from Suchetgarh to Ikhnal some

30 miles further east. The object was to pin down Pakistan's IV Corps, including the sixth Armoured division, draw it into battle and prevent the enemy from launching an offensive on Jammu city in her diversionary tactics.

The battle in this sector began with a bang. The amount of armour and heavy artillery that Pakistan brought into action showed how strongly they were poised for attack. They put American Pattons and Chaffes in the counter-attack to halt our advancing columns but our jawans set many of them in flames.

On 8 September, Indian forces made a diversionary attack across the Rajasthan-Sind border at Gadra in order to hold down the Pakistan Division located in the Karachi-Hyderabad region. The aim was to prevent this Division from either moving north to the main battle area or initiating any independent action.

Decisive Battles

While these actions were in progress in the wings and a ding-dong struggle continued in the Lahore theatre, two major battles were building up in Kasur and Jammu-Sialkot. The withdrawal by Indian forces in the Kasur sector was purely tactical. They took up new positions in a horseshoe at the head of a fork at Khemkaran hinging on the village of Asal Uttar, four miles beyond this little town. Apparently the Pakistanis misread the Indian move. They thought that the time was ripe for them to counter-attack and rushed headlong into what had now become a trap. Five armoured attacks were launched one after the other between 9 and 10 September. The Indian armour, lying concealed in tall fields of ripening cane and bajra, was waiting for the kill to step into the trap. As soon as they did, the Indians cut a nullah, thus bogging the land to the enemy's left flank who had now little freedom of manoeuvre. It was a field day for the Indians who got the prestige kill of the General Officer Commanding the Division and the Artillery Commander. It was a victory won by superior tactics, gunnery and training against a larger and better equipped armoured force. Pakistan lost 97 tanks, a large number of them Pattons, of which 15 were captured intact and two surrendered with crew. Two Lieutenant Colonels, six Majors and six other officers and several other ranks were taken prisoner.

A worse fate awaited Pakistan's more recently formed Sixth Armoured Division in the Sialkot theatre. Action was joined on

8 September. The Indian armour moved forwards toward Phillora, south-east of Sialkot. Units of the Pakistan's sixth Armoured Division moved up from Badian, Pasrur and Phillora to counter-attack and thus was fought a series of tank battles, the biggest since the Second World War, and sustained without break over a period of 15 days.

The battle of Phillora was fought on 11 September. Skilfully deployed and mutually supporting Indian tank columns executed a flanking movement that separated the enemy armour from his infantry by a manouevre, cut his armour into separate segments, forced his tanks to close in and then annihilated them piecemeal with tactical superiority and super gunnery. As many as 66 enemy tanks were destroyed on that day for a loss of only six, a notable victory that will find a very high place in the annals of armoured warfare. Having smashed the Pakistani armour, the Indian infantry units stormed through the Pakistani defences to take the town. The cease-fire on 23 September saw the Indian forces holding a salient of some 180 square miles, only 4,000 yards from Sialkot at one end and up to and including Alhar railway station near Chawinda at the other. In Phillora sector they had forced up to Kalowali towards Chawinda, but were robbed of their prize by the cease-fire.

The capture of Burki by the Indian forces was feat of bravery and tactical superiority over the better equipped Pakistanis. The march to Burki took less than 22 hours. The Indian troops risked their lives in engaging the enemy gunners from very close quarters, while several others crept stealthily from the flanks and threw grenades inside the pillboxes causing instantaneous death to all the gunners there. The process was repeated and ultimately all the miniature steel and concrete fortresses fell and were captured. The loss of Burki and before it of the post of Hudiara was a telling blow to the enemy. Our forces had thus made a big salient several miles deep into Pakistan and were almost overlooking the suburbs of Lahore.

The 22-days fighting between India and Pakistan was actually the finest hour of the Indian Air Force. The trail of glory which it left in the sky began with the very first aerial combat on 3 September, when a force of IAF fighters was ordered to intercept the bigger and faster Starfighters and Sabres attacking the Indian forces. The war in the air was fought at various levels: ground attack and support, strategic bombing of enemy airfields, radar stations and other vital installations, disruption of enemy communications and supplies, air

defence of Indian skies and aerial reconnaissance. By the time the hostilities ceased, the IAF had definitely established India's air superiority. Pakistan started the war with 104 F-86 Sabre jets, 12 F-104 and 24 B-57 bombers and lost more than half the total number of these aircrafts.

At a time when the heroic officers and men of India's Armed Forces were engaged over the Indo-Pak borders, nothing was more reassuring than the high morale of the people behind the lines. Standing firmly behind the men of the Armed Forces throughout the three weeks of fighting was a nation, united and determined. The Armed Forces themselves were a mirror of the rich mosaic of India's secular democracy which was fighting the battle against medievalism, bigotry and war mongering. Out of this baptism of fire the ancient Indian nation emerged with a new lustre.

The Cease-Fire and After

In its resolutions of 4 and 6 September, when the Security Council was roused to activity, it charged the UN Secretary-General with the responsibility of bringing about a cease-fire between India and Pakistan. U Thant, the Secretary-General, undertook a tour of the Indian subcontinent and met the leaders of Pakistan and India separately at Rawalpindi and New Delhi. The Pakistan authorities, however, far from responding in a positive manner to U Thant's efforts, sought to utilise his visit to attain the objectives which they had failed to achieve by force of arms. For 18 years Pakistan had, through a combination of diplomatic intrigue and military action, endeavoured to reopen the question of the status of Kashmir and challenge India's sovereignty over the State in the name of the principle of self-determination. So far all its efforts including the assault by its armoured columns in Chhamb had failed. Now it sought to exploit the world's concern for peace for the same end by laying down its three objectives as preconditions for a cease-fire. It asked for withdrawal of all forces including those of India from the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir and induction of foreign troops in the State as a UN peace-keeping force to be followed by a plebiscite within three months. As Prime Minister Shastri said, not one of these conditions was acceptable to India.

Meanwhile the course of the war was going against Pakistan. She was desperate. President Ayub Khan hence sent a pathetic a ppeal to President Johnson to intervene personally in the dispute

with India. But the latter's reply was that the United States would "fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring peace between the great nations of India and Pakistan."

U Thant was continuing his efforts for a cease-fire. A series of meetings of the Security Council were held from 17 to 20 September. Ultimately the Council passed a resolution on 20 September, demanding a cease-fire with effect from 0700 hours GMT on 22 September 1965. It called upon both the Governments to issue orders for a cease-fire at that moment and a subsequent withdrawal of all armed personnel back to the positions held by them before 5 August 1965.

On receiving the Security Council resolution, Government of India sent a communication to the Secretary-General informing him that they would be prepared to issue orders for a simple cease-fire effective from the appointed time and date provided Pakistan agreed to do likewise. But Pakistan would not immediately accept the proposal. As Prime Minister Shastri said, "they wanted the cease-fire, indeed they needed it, but as is their practice, they wanted to put up a show of resistance till the very last moment." A few hours later, Pakistan's Foreign Minister announced at a specially convened meeting of the Security Council that his country had also accepted the resolution of the Council. Hence the cease-fire came into effect from 3.30 am IST on 23 September 1965.

On that day India was in occupation of nearly 740 square miles of Pakistan territory while Pakistan held only 210 square miles of Indian territory. Indian troops were 8 to 10 miles deep inside Pakistan in the Lahore area, while in the Sialkot area they had consolidated their position about 15 miles deep. In Rajasthan area, they were about 30 miles inside Pakistan from Gadra on the border.

Pakistan's war machinery had been virtually crippled. They had lost heavily in tanks, aircraft and other military equipment. India's main objectives were thus achieved. These were to prevent the annexation of Kashmir by force; to give notice to Rawalpindi and the world that if Kashmir was important for Pakistan, it was no less important for India; to show that India was not a flabby giant and that if pushed too far it could and would strike hard.

But Pakistan had not yet reconciled itself to maintaining a permanent peace on the sub-continent. She showed scant respect for the cease-fire and had been seeking to rehabilitate its military losses by continued infiltration, encroachment and open seizure of large tracts

of Indian territory. Simultaneously she launched a vigorous drive to regain diplomatic initiative at Lake Success and other foreign capitals. Her plan was to raise political issue, particularly Kashmir, along with the cease-fire and troop withdrawals. This was firmly resisted by India.

Outside the United Nations there were forces working for a peaceful settlement of the India-Pakistan conflict. Immediately after Pakistan's massive assault on India in Chhamb, the Soviet Union took active steps to prevent escalation of the war. On 4 September, the USSR premier, A.N. Kosygin expressed his concern over the fighting both to Prime Minister Shastri and President Ayub Khan. The Soviet Union, he said, "would not be frank if we did not say that a military conflict in Kashmir is a matter of concern to the Soviet Government because, apart from other things, it is a development in a region which directly borders on the Soviet Union." He put forward certain considerations for the settlement of the conflict. These included an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of forces of the respective countries to positions behind the cease-fire line.

On 11 September, the Soviet Prime Minister renewed his offer of good offices and pointed out his country's special interest in the situation in Kashmir which, he said, "lay directly on the Russian frontiers." Pakistan's reaction to Mr Kosygin's offer of good offices and a summit meeting between Mr Shastri and President Ayub Khan on Soviet soil was, however, lukewarm. She, it appeared, was banking upon support from and intervention on her behalf by her friends in the Security Council. But when the Council did not oblige her, she turned to the Russian offer. Mr Bhutto undertook a visit to Moscow on 23 November and accepted Mr Kosygin's proposal. But he laid down certain preconditions, particularly the reopening of the Kashmir question. India made it clear that while accepting the good offices of Mr Kosygin, she would not take part in a meeting where the talk was going to be held to discuss Kashmir. But if it was suggested that India should have some talks on the total relationship between India and Pakistan — that India and Pakistan should live as good neighbours — Mr Shastri would not like to say no to it. Mr Bhutto was thus convinced that India could not be browbeaten. On 25 November, he told newsmen in Moscow that President Ayub would be prepared to discuss with Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri the whole gamut of India-Pakistan relations at a summit meeting anywhere on Soviet soil.

Tashkent Declaration

The summit meeting was held at Tashkent on 4 January 1966. Premier Kosygin was helpful throughout the seven days that the meeting lasted in bringing about a successful conclusion of the talks over a varied number of subjects on which there existed conflicts and differences between the two countries. When almost a deadlock had been reached on 9 January, he held long meetings with both the statesmen which resulted in the Tashkent Declaration of 10 January 1966.

According to the Declaration the two leaders of India and Pakistan announced their firm resolve to restore normal and peaceful relations between the two countries and to promote understanding and friendly relations between their peoples. They considered the attainment of these objectives of vital importance for the welfare of the 600 million people of India and Pakistan. They further agreed to exert all efforts to create good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan in accordance with the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed their obligations under the Charter not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means.

The two leaders agreed to withdraw by 25 February, 1966 all armed personnel of the two countries to the positions they held prior to 5 August 1965. Further, they announced that the relations between the two countries shall be based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other. To further cement the relations between the two neighbouring countries, they agreed to discourage any propaganda directed against the other country and to consider measures towards the restoration of economic and trade relations, communications as well as cultural exchanges between India and Pakistan. Another important article related to the setting up of joint committees to suggest further steps to be taken by the two governments to bring the peoples of the two countries nearer to one another.

The ink in the historic Declaration was hardly dry when the joy at the successful conclusion of the summit meeting, turned into sudden grief. Within a few hours of the signing of the Declaration, Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away at Tashkent from a heart attack. The news of his sudden death plunged India into grief. It was a tragedy for the people of India who were left orphaned at a time when they needed him most.

It was hoped by the peace-loving citizens of the world that the spirit of Tashkent would now govern the relations between India and Pakistan. An era of friendship, cooperation and cordiality was envisaged to begin between the two countries. Lal Bahadur Shastri's supreme sacrifice — he worked himself to death during the negotiations at Tashkent — was believed to have further sanctified the historic Declaration.

But these pious hopes were belied immediately after the troop withdrawals to the 5 August 1965 positions were completed. There was an immediate outcry in Pakistan against some of the articles of the Declaration. Pakistan's anger and frustration compelled President Ayub Khan to back out from honouring the various provisions of the agreement. He refused even to open trade with India. Meanwhile hostile propaganda against India was resumed with full vigour by Pakistan press and radio.

As days passed, there developed a vehement opposition to the rule of President Ayub Khan. But instead of handing over the reins of office to popular leaders, he quietly passed over the control of Pakistan to a military junta led by the army chief, General Yahya Khan.

The military junta's first concern was to repair and rebuild their damaged war machine. Apart from their Western friends, they received substantial quantities of military hardware from China. The embargo on arms supplies to India and Pakistan placed by America and Britain during the 1965 conflict, was circumvented by surreptitious imports through some of Pakistan's allies in CENTO. By 1971 Pakistan had built up a formidable war machine and the military junta were confident they could avenge their defeat suffered at the hands of India in 1965.

So, for the fourth time since Independence, Pakistan hurled her armed forces against India in December 1971.

The 14-Day War of 1971

The immediate cause was the explosive situation in what was then called East Pakistan. The military junta had let loose there a reign of terror to suppress the popular uprising against them. For over 24 years the people there had been exploited by West Pakistan rulers, and when a year earlier the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman scored a landslide victory in the first ever

General Elections held in Pakistan, the military junta got a shock at the prospect of losing their hold on Bangla Desh.

Hence on 25 March 1971, the Pakistan army swooped down on the people of Bangla Desh with tanks, artillery and aerial bombing, spreading death, destruction and devastation. About one million people were killed in the blood bath that followed. To escape the butchery, some ten million people fled to India in the biggest over migration in history. This avalanche of human beings imposed a heavy strain on India's economic and social structure and threatened her security. Indian leaders tried to rouse the world conscience and appealed to world's leaders to intervene so that the refugees returned to their homes with security and honour. But all their appeals went unheeded.

Meanwhile the uprising spearheaded by the Mukti Bahini or freedom fighters, assumed formidable proportions. India's sympathy for the suffering refugees and the Mukti Bahini, provoked Pakistan to start border skirmishes which gathered momentum as days passed. When the military junta found that it would not be long for the Mukti Bahini to inflict crippling blows on the occupation forces, they turned their attention to India. On 3 December 1971, Pakistan launched a pre-emptive strike on 12 of our airfields and formally declared war on India.

In her broadcast to the nation, the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, said that the "war on Bangla Desh has become a war on India" and warned the people to be prepared for a long period of hardship and sacrifice.

Fortunately India's armed forces backed by a nation, united and firm, dealt a quick and decisive blow to the aggressor and brought him to his knees. After only a fortnight of fighting, Pakistani forces in Bangla Desh surrendered unconditionally to the G.O.C-in-C. of the Indian and Bangla Desh forces in Eastern Theatre. Having achieved the objective, namely, the liberation of Bangla Desh, India declared a unilateral cease-fire from the evening of 17 December 1971.

A Lightning Campaign

Yahya Khan's action in starting a war with India had three objectives in view: to tie down our security forces in the west, so that we may not be able to move some of them to reinforce the eastern sector, if required; to provoke us to commit our reserves in the west to a

premature offensive on to the well-prepared and formidable defences in the Punjab sector; and thirdly to internationalise the problem of Bangla Desh and invoke the good offices of the UN and other big powers to bring about a cease-fire before the Mukti Bahini gained complete control of Bangla Desh.

But as things developed, he did not succeed in any of his objectives. Our forces in the west played mainly a defensive role; our reserve on the western front were not committed; and the UN was powerless to do anything. On the contrary, India gained the support of those elements of the world population who had been horrified at the atrocities committed by Pakistani occupation forces in Bangla Desh.

The regular campaign for the liberation of Bangla Desh lasted hardly 12 days. This short and sharp campaign across a vast expanse of land, criss-crossed with rivers and rivulets, inhabited by nearly 75 million people and held down by over 93,000 regular and paramilitary forces of West Pakistan, will rank in the annals of military history as a remarkable feat.

Geographically, Bangla Desh is such that it offers a well-equipped defender ideal opportunities to hold positions along river lines and turn the marshes and paddy fields of the region into death traps for the advancing troops. To further impede a quick advance, bridges and ferries over the waterways had been systematically destroyed by the occupation forces as they fell back on Dhaka. Also, in the earlier phase of the liberation struggle, road and rail bridges and culverts throughout the country had been blown up by the Mukti Bahini. Taking all these factors into consideration the quick converging move on Dhaka, the capital and the headquarters of the occupation forces, was a brilliant feat indeed.

The thrust on Dhaka developed from three directions. Our troops crossed into Bangla Desh on 4 December, and making contact with the Mukti Bahini, advanced with infantry, artillery and armour from Hilli towards Bogra; Boyra towards Jessore and Agartala towards Akhaura. Simultaneously, additional columns of troops entered Bangla Desh from different points, the main objective being to isolate and fragment the Pakistani garrisons and to prevent them from functioning as a cohesive force under a single central command in Bangla Desh.

Our air force, after a series of grim battles, secured mastery of the

air within 24 hours. Our naval forces attacked installations and other important targets on the coast as well as deep inside river estuaries. The ground forces taking full advantage of the gallant support provided by air and naval arms, wisely bypassed enemy strong points and endeavoured to converge on Dhaka. The speed of our flanking movements and the determination with which they were pressed, rendered the long prepared positions of the enemy untenable. Pockets of the enemy left behind were dealt with by follow-up echelons.

It was a quick dash to Dhaka. Town after town fell before our advancing columns. Kamalpur was liberated the first day. Akhaura and Laksham followed the next day. Sylhet and Comilla met the same fate. With the fall of these important towns, the resistance began to crumble. The troops which captured Akhaura immediately began their march on Dhaka. In western Bangla Desh, the Jessore and Rangpur-Dinajpur sector could not hold out in the face of the lightning advance of our troops. The morale of the enemy sàgged further with the sinking of two of their destroyers off Karachi and also of several gunboats. Our aircraft-carrier *Vikrant* with supporting ships and submarines immobilised the port facilities at Chittagong and the Khulna-Chalna-Mongla complex, and damaged airfields and military installations on the southern periphery. Amphibian landings were carried out at Cox's Bazar to seal off a possible escape route to Burma.

By 9 December, Pakistan troops in Bangla Desh were completely surrounded. They were shaken and demoralised and were running hastily into Dhaka in great confusion. Most of their columns had lost contact with one another. By the evening of 12 December, our army had ringed round Dhaka and was preparing itself for the final assault on the capital. For quick and effective river crossings, parachute and airborne troops in sufficient strength were deployed so as to bring the operations in the eastern theatre to a quick and successful conclusion. Their employment at this stage of operations underlines the coordination and careful and able planning that characterised all operations in the 14-day war.

The airborne operations were synchronised with other ground operations and the activities of the Mukti Bahini who were already engaged in heavy fighting in the area. The detached groups of the Bahini as well as our ground troops soon linked up with the airborne troops. Their tasks, among other things, were to take over important tactical features within the Dhaka complex, such as air landing grounds

and river crossings with the twin objectives of enabling the induction of our main force and preventing the egress of the units of the enemy.

By 14 December, the Indian forces advancing from the west were ferried across the river Meghna near Bhairab Bazar. Their leading element reached Narsingdi, some miles beyond. The advance from the north passed Tangail where paratroopers were dropped to help local guerrilla forces capture the town, and reached Jayadevpur, 18 kilometres from Dhaka. The two other columns which reached the vicinity of Dhaka were from west to Chandpur, and one from the Jessor-Khulna direction which reached Faridpur.

So it was not surprising that by the evening of 14 December, a part of the Dhaka garrison surrendered and the Pakistani administration collapsed. Next day realising the hopelessness of the situation, the G.O.C-in C of the occupation forces, General A.A.K. Niazi asked for a cease-fire and on the 16th he surrendered unconditionally to our and Bangla Desh command in the eastern theatre. The long suffering people of Bangla Desh were able to breathe the fresh air of freedom and liberty. In the words of Mrs Gandhi, "Dacca was now the free capital of a free country."

Action on the Western Front

When in the afternoon of 3 December 1971, Yahya Khan started the war with a pre-emptive air strike on 12 of our airfields in the western theatre, his main objective was to cripple as much of our air-force as possible. Once this was achieved, he would gain an overwhelming advantage in the land war that would follow. For, Pakistan's military junta firmly believed that the fate of Bangla Desh would be decided on the plains of Delhi. According to them Dhaka might fall but so would Delhi and this would give them a strong bargaining counter.

With this aim in view, Pakistan had been hatching a plot to strike without warning. There had been numerous violations of Indian air space; Pakistan aircraft had flown over the Srinagar airfield on more than one occasion, and the border between Kashmir and Rajasthan had also received their attention.

The border areas of West Pakistan facing the Indian territory of Punjab and Jammu had also been the scene of much activity. The villages were evacuated and regular troops had taken over the posts normally held by border guards. There were reports that the

area facing the Punjab and Sialkot sector had been heavily reinforced, and that bunkers, mine-fields and strong points were set up. Foreigners entering India by land from Lahore talked about large bodies of troops, guns and armour moving down the main roads towards Lahore, and of the war hysteria that had been built up in Pakistan.

But to Pakistan's dismay the blitzkrieg on our airports did not produce the expected results. Not only was the pre-emptive strike ineffective, but our air-force and ground defences took a heavy toll of the enemy aircraft. For an attempt to destroy our radar station in Amritsar, the Pakistan radar station at Badin in the Rann of Kutch was attacked. Then came our attacks on the Pakistan air bases at Sargodha, Murid, Shorkot, Risalwala, Mianwali, Masroor near Karachi and Chanderi. Indian air crews reported good results at all the targets. In the air, the total tally of Pakistan planes downed was 19, nine of them on the ground at Masroor airport near Karachi.

This seems to have opened the eyes of the self-deceived Pakistan High Command, for their cherished ground thrust towards Amritsar, Jammu and other prestigious objectives did not come off. Instead they mounted repeated assaults on our positions in Chhamb, Shulemanki and Hussainiwala sectors where they encountered stiff resistance from our defence forces. It was, however, on Chhamb that Pakistan laid high stakes.

Chhamb was very prominent in the 1965 War. It was in this sector that the Pakistanis launched a massive armour-cum-infantry attack with the object of capturing Akhnoor, and segregating Kashmir from Jammu. The massive attack this time was obviously designed to attain the objective which eluded them in 1965.

The attack on Chhamb on the morning of 4 December, began with a heavy artillery barrage. It developed into a massive assault on Deva Mandela by two Pakistan infantry brigades supported by a tank regiment. The attack was repulsed with heavy casualties. Next day the enemy launched another attack, this time using two infantry divisions and three regiments of armour, and by evening had captured the feature.

Our forces regrouped at once and next day the Pakistanis were thrown back with the loss of their 33 tanks. Indian forces were again on the west bank of the shallow Munawwar Tawi. In the following days, Pakistanis attempted to recross the river on more than three

occasions but were beaten back. General Tikka Khan, who personally directed the operations, launched five fierce attacks during the course of the first week of fighting in a vain bid to effect a breakthrough to Akhnoor, but each time his attack was blunted and his troops ejected from the east bank of the Munawwar Tawi. By 11 December, the enemy realised the futility of pounding his head on the solid wall of our defences and gave up further offensive action. The only gain they could claim with all their efforts and heavy losses, was a narrow strip of land on the west bank of the Munawwar Tawi.

Another sector where Pakistan attempted to get a foothold was the Uri-Poonch sector. Pakistan has always looked upon Poonch as a prestigious objective but Indian defenders stood like a rock and all the enemy attacks were beaten back with heavy losses to their men and material.

Though India's strategy in the western theatre was mainly defensive while the campaign in Bangla Desh was in progress, our forces were not absolutely static. A two-pronged attack was launched into Sind from the Rajasthan sector on 5 December. Our forces advanced to 40 kilometres west of Gadra Road. The advance was rapid considering the nature of the terrain, and by the evening of 7 December, a number of towns and villages were captured in the Sind and Barmer sectors. By the 10th, Naya Chhor opposite Barmer, was contacted; the entire Nagarparkar bulge in the Gugwat sector was in our hands. Pakistan replied with a thrust in the Jaisalmer sector which was repulsed by a devastating blow at Longewala delivered mainly by our air force. The railway line from Gadra Road was linked up further with the rail track connecting Naya Chhor and Mirpur Khas. In the Bikaner sector several villages were taken by us and in the Kutch sector the entire Chhad Bet region was cleared.

In Kashmir our forces cleared over 50 enemy posts in Kargil, Gurais and Uri. In the Tithwal sector a substantial portion of the Lipa valley came into our hands. Some commanding heights across the old cease-fire line were taken by us in the Poonch-Naushera-Rajauri sector. The whole of the Akhnoor Dagger salient and a number of border posts in the Jammu sector, came to our hands. The Indian forces crossed the Basantar river and the greater part of the Shakargarh-Zafarwal salient was taken by them after fierce tank battles.

In Punjab the Dera Baba Nanak enclave, south of the Ravi, was

occupied by us. Several border posts in the Dera Baba Nanak-Ajnala-Amritsar-Khem Karan-Ferozepur-Mamdot and Fazilka sectors were captured. In all over 5,000 square miles of Pakistan territory was in our hands at the time of the cease-fire.

Supremacy of IAF

A notable feature of the 14-day war both in the eastern and western theatres was the close coordination between Indian ground, air and naval forces. While the army was dealing heavy blows on the enemy on land, the Indian Air Force was active striking, without interruption, by day and by night at enemy aircraft on the ground, at airfield installations, runways and radar stations. Troop concentrations were broken up and armoured columns were scattered. Important installations of military value were severely damaged and the transportation system was disrupted. In addition, the IAF provided air cover to ground forces and cooperated with them in destroying the enemy tanks. The air defence units took a heavy toll of the enemy's intruding aircraft.

In Bangla Desh the Indian Air Force achieved mastery of the vast airspace within the first 24 hours by completely annihilating the Pakistan Air Force. By 11 December, the Indian airforce with its 250 to 300 sorties a day as against a paltry 10 Pakistani sorties, had established a near supremacy all along western front and in the areas adjoining the border.

Indian Navy Blossoms Forth

Indian Navy, which is the youngest arm of our forces, blossomed forth with its bold and dashing action in challenging the Pak Navy not only in their home waters but also within their very base at Karachi. The day after the outbreak of war, a task force of gunships and rocket boats carried out a daring and well-timed attack on Pakistani warships on patrol outside Karachi and on Karachi harbour itself, creating absolute havoc in the area. In a brief spell, Pakistan's powerful destroyers *Khyber* and *Shah Jahan* and one of their mine sweepers were sunk. Most of the harbour installations were damaged and a large oil dump at the entrance was left burning.

A second task force from the western fleet carried out yet another raid on Karachi harbour four days later and attacked three enemy ships. This task force then went on to an offensive sweep off the Makaran coast, attacking many military targets in the area.

The eastern fleet too achieved notable successes. In the early hours of 3 December, the crew of a destroyer on patrol at the entrance of Vishakhapatnam harbour detected a submarine by her sonar. It was promptly attacked with depth bombs and an explosion was heard, indicative of the destruction of a submarine. Conclusive evidence that it was Pakistan's largest submarine *Ghazi*, gifted to her by the Americans, became available only five days later.

From the aircraft-carrier *Vikrant* operating in the Bay of Bengal, aircraft flew several sorties every day against ships and harbour installations of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Khulna-Chalna-Mongla harbour complexes, in the Meghna estuary and on many other afloat and shore targets. In these attacks they sunk 12 gunboats and damaged many installations of military importance in all Bangla Desh harbours. The runway of Chittagong airport was sufficiently damaged to make it unserviceable for days.

The Navy's task was also to cut the maritime lines of communication of Pakistan which virtually amounted to the blockade of Pakistani and Bangla Desh harbours. Thus while our ports functioned normally, our Navy completely succeeded in cutting off the enemy's supplies by sea.

The enemy paid dearly for his aggression. Pakistani losses in equipment — aircraft, tanks, warships, submarines, gunboats, mine sweepers — both in the eastern and western sectors were enormous. Her casualties — dead, wounded and missing — were very heavy. In Bangla Desh alone, over 93,000 of her officers, jawans and other personnel surrendered to Indian and Bangla Desh command, and were taken prisoners of war. The huge quantity of arms, ammunition, tanks, vehicles and other military hardware which they lost in this theatre alone runs into millions of rupees. Pakistan's experience of 14 days of fighting, the loss of territory, and of manpower, together with the severe damage inflicted on equipment and installations should have convinced her of the disastrous consequences of armed aggression.

The Simla Agreement

With the cease-fire coming into effect from 2000 hours IST on Friday, 17 December 1971, India and Bangla Desh began exchange of views on their immediate problems, namely rehabilitation of the refugees and reconstruction of the shattered economy of Bangla Desh. The bulk of the refugees returned to their homes by the end of

February 1972. Since the Prime Minister of India had declared that Indian armed forces would not remain in Bangla Desh any longer than was necessary, India took steps to their withdrawal, which was completed by the end of March 1972.

Meanwhile there was a change of government in Pakistan. The military junta which had brought so much misery and suffering on the people in Bangla Desh and Pakistan, was thoroughly discredited and it invited Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to take over the Government of Pakistan. Mr Bhutto had, a year earlier, been returned to the Pakistan National Assembly as the leader of the majority party in West Pakistan.

One of the first acts of Mr Bhutto was to release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from his detention in Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was given a tumultuous welcome in Dhaka and in his first public speech in New Delhi, on his way there, he expressed his gratitude for the generous help extended by the people of India to Bangla Desh in her liberation struggle.

There, however, remained the main problem of restoring peaceful relations with Pakistan. India made it known from the beginning that it was against any third party mediation between India and Pakistan. On 14 February 1972, India in a letter to the UN Secretary-General offered to hold direct talks with Pakistan "at any time, at any level and without any preconditions." Later Mrs Gandhi wrote to Mr Bhutto suggesting emissary-level talks to prepare for a summit. At the same time she ruled out any third party mediation. Finally the emissary-level talks were held at Murree (Pakistan) on 26 April, 1972. A joint statement, issued after four days of talks, announced that Mrs Gandhi and Mr Bhutto would meet in Delhi towards the end of May or beginning of June.

But the schedule was not kept by Pakistan as Mr Bhutto preferred first to go on a visit to North African and West Asian countries, presumably to solicit support for the stand he proposed to take at the summit. He wanted the prisoners of war to be repatriated, the territories taken by India in the war to be returned, and the right of self-determination conceded by India to the people of Kashmir.

However, the summit meeting did finally take place at Simla from 28 June to 3 July, 1972. There were several deadlocks during the talks both at the official and summit level. The stumbling block, according to Mr Bhutto, was Kashmir. When the talks were about to

end in failure, Mrs Gandhi and Mr Bhutto met in a last minute attempt to save the summit. This resulted in the Simla Agreement between the two leaders signed on 3 July 1972.

In all the six clauses of the Agreement the emphasis is on the promotion of friendly and harmonious relationship between the two countries and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent. The two governments agree to settle all the differences between their respective countries by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations. They undertake to abstain from hostile propaganda directed against each other. Steps are to be taken to open trade, to exchange cultural missions and to resume communications between the two countries including over-flights.

In order to initiate this process of establishment of durable peace the two governments agree that Indian and Pakistani forces shall be withdrawn to their side of the international border within 30 days of the agreement coming into effect. But in Kashmir they would continue to remain at the new line of control, which the two sides will not try to change by force.

Finally the two governments agreed that another summit meeting be held in the near future to take up the question of repatriation of prisoners of war, final settlement of the question of Jammu and Kashmir and resumption of diplomatic relation.

The exchange of the instruments of ratification was completed on 4 August 1972, when the Agreement became effective.

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SIMLA AGREEMENT AND AFTER

The terms of the Simla Agreement whose instruments of ratification were exchanged between India and Pakistan on 4 August 1972, did not come up to the expectations of the people of India. Instead of enforcing the line of control in Kashmir as the international border, the Agreement was a repetition of the saying that whenever our armed forces gained a victory on the battlefield, our political leaders surrendered it on the negotiating table.

However, a story was doing the rounds that Mrs Gandhi had renamed the cease-fire line as *"Line of Actual Control"* with the secret assurance of Mr Bhutto that given time he would convince his people that it should be the international border between India and Pakistan.

Mr Bhutto was silent over the story till he saw through the evacuation of Pakistan territory occupied by Indian forces during the war and the release of over a lakh of Pakistani officers and other ranks taken as prisoners of war after their surrender to the Indian Command in Dhaka.

Once these operations were completed to Mr Bhutto's satisfaction, he came down heavily on the story of a secret understanding on Kashmir by declaring that it was very much a live issue as even the Agreement itself envisaged its solution through bilateral discussion between the two countries.

This announcement boosted the morale of the anti-India Muslims who were coming round to believe that the crushing defeat of Pakistan by India's armed forces had put the final seal on Kashmir's accession to India.

So under Mir Qasim's rule "overt and covert" support to pro-Pak elements continued to grow with the result that the Jamat-i-Islami could win five seats for the first time in the State legislative assembly.

Simultaneously the demand for plebiscite grew in vehemence. The hopes of those Indians who were looking forward to a new era thus got frustrated.

Sheikh Abdullah Again

As already mentioned Sheikh Abdullah remained in political wilderness for 22 years after his dismissal and arrest on 9 August 1953. During this period the situation in the State was to a great extent stabilised. The Kashmir government under Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and his two successors worked for a closer integration with the Centre. Many Articles of the Constitution of India and a large number of Central laws and institutions were extended to the State. This enabled the State to secure Central funds on the basis of "ninety per cent as grant and ten per cent as loan."

However, during Mir Qasim's regime Sheikh Abdullah and his adviser Mirza Afzal Beg were released. The Sheikh anxious to regain power approached Mrs Gandhi to reappoint him as Chief Minister.

Thinking that the Sheikh was now a chastened man and would work for reconciliation of the Kashmiris, Mrs Gandhi negotiated an Accord with him in 1975 by the terms of which he was to become the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State. And the same year Mir Qasim was asked to step down and hand over the charge to Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah.

Here we enter the murkiest period of Centre-State relations. Securing an overwhelming majority for his party Sheikh consolidated his position. But the sentiments expressed by the people this time were contrary to what they used to feel on his earlier victories. He was openly accused of having sold his conscience and the Muslims of the Valley for the lure of power through this accord.

Actually they voiced the feelings of the young Kashmiris who were angry at seeing yesterday's paupers wallowing in riches under the patronage of the Sheikh and his innumerable cronies, relations and friends. For most of the funds pumped into the State by the Central government from behind the wall of Article 370 found their way straight into the pockets of these parasites.

No wonder the youth considered secession from India the only panacea for their ills. There were several bomb explosions spread

over different parts of the Valley to convey the first signals of this malady.

However, the Centre as usual closed its eyes to all these happenings. The dominating position of Sheikh Abdullah, his cohorts and the National Conference appeared to it as sufficient guarantee for moulding the public opinion and cementing the links between Kashmir and the rest of India.

This feeling of self-satisfaction was apparent from the State funeral extended to Sheikh Abdullah on his death in 1982.

On Sheikh Abdullah's death his son Farooq Abdullah was installed as Chief Minister of the Jammu and Kashmir State. B.K. Nehru, the Governor, invited him to take the oath of office without going through other formalities.

When Farooq took over as Chief Minister, it was an entirely different scenario prevailing in the Valley. No longer did the writ of the National Conference Government run without facing opposition from the people. Nor did they consider Sheikh Abdullah having been the saviour of Kashmir. A new wave of Islamic fundamentalism was sweeping over the Valley and replacing the traditional religious and political beliefs of the Kashmiris, particularly of the young.

The Fudamentalist Wave

The ground for the growth of Islamic Fundamentalism was prepared during Sheikh Abdullah's second stint of power. Pakistan financed and sent to the Valley young Jamat-i-Islami preachers in hundreds to address the Friday congregations in every mosque. They mounted a fierce assault on the belief of the Kashmiri Muslims in the teachings of their patron-saint, Nand Rishi. This resulted in Islamic Fundamentalism taking roots among the growing generation. Similar were the activities of the Jamat-i-Islami teachers who opened dozens of schools both in the urban and rural areas to sow the seeds of fundamentalism among the budding generation of Muslim population.

This brainwashing continued with greater zeal during the period that followed. Unfortunately there was no counterforce with which the people would have been able to repulse the wave. Loyalty to India, their motherland, would have served the purpose, but thanks to the preachings of Sheikh Abdullah this sentiment was not only wiped off their brains but an anti-India feeling inserted in its place. So when Farooq Abdullah was holding the reins of office a large number

of young frustrated Muslims were ready to join any movement which would bring in Nizam-i-Mustafa, at the point of the gun if need be.

A Cultured and Tolerant People

But militancy is alien to the Kashmir ethos. For till only two decades ago an average Kashmiri was known to be a gentle, helpful, hospitable and accommodating person. His religious tolerance, the result of the soft teachings of Kashmir's patron saint Sheikh Nur-ud-din alias Nand Rishi, was exhibited by his cordial relations with his Hindu neighbours. This homogenous community of two religions was a model for people all over India.

Nand Rishi taught by example and precept a simple philosophy of life which was an amalgam of Kashmir Saivism and Islamic Sufism. He was a Rishi in the true sense of the word leading the life of self-abnegation, nonviolence, love and service to all. Abul Fazal has given us a graphic picture of these Rishis:

"The most respectable people of Kashmir are the Rishis who do not suffer themselves to be fettered by traditions. They are doubtless true worshippers of God. They revile not any other sect and ask nothing of anyone."

No wonder the entire Muslim population of the Valley followed his teachings and tried to lead their lives according to the true essence of Islam.

It is not, therefore, surprising that nearly a hundred years ago Sir Walter Lawrence, the great authority on Kashmir and its people, recorded in his *Valley* that crime against person was unknown in Kashmir.

So how can one explain the wholesale and brutal killings by Kashmiri terrorists? What has brought about this sea-change in their behaviour?

Genesis of Secessionism and Militancy

The most important reason is the replacement of the philosophy of the Rishi cult by Islamic Fundamentalism with its bait of establishing the Nizam-i-Mustafa in the Valley. The other cogent reason for this phenomenon is the geo-political situation in which the Kashmiris are hemmed in the Indian sub-continent. Its pulls and pressures have reversed the historical process of their full integration with India

physically and mentally. The result is that the younger generation of Muslims has turned into a rabid anti-India community.

The most prominent role played in this process is by Pakistan whose leaders have expressed ad nauseam that their country is incomplete without Kashmir. So this Islamic State of Pakistan is beaconing the Kashmiri Muslims to join it and thus convert the Valley into a land where Nizam-i-Mustafa would rule supreme. In other words they are exhorted to work for secession from India.

But this is difficult to achieve. With the acceptance of the Maharaja's instrument of accession by the Government of India in 1947, Jammu and Kashmir State became an inalienable part of the Union of India. Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah who claimed to represent the people of the State gave his blessings to the event.

But later developments proved he was sincere neither to the people of Kashmir nor to the Government of India. Instead of working for development of harmonious relations between the State and the Centre, he tried his utmost to distance them from each other. He fought tooth and nail against forging the same constitutional relations with the Centre as other B class states of India. Finally he managed to hammer out against strong opposition from the Central leadership the Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which gives a special but not a closer status to Kashmir. He argued that the Kashmiri Muslims had to safeguard themselves from being overwhelmed by the predominantly Hindu India, and had, therefore, to remain outside the orbit of its political influence.

So tacitly their own leaders too sent to the Kashmiri Muslims signals identical to those from Pakistan. The common factor of both was "Secession from India". Militancy is its off-shoot - the tool to achieve it.

But to force India to part with the Valley required armed strength. From where was it to come?

There was no other direction to look for aid than Pakistan. But that country had fought three full-fledged wars against India for getting possession of the State. In all these it suffered severe defeats. In the last one a complete corps of Pakistan army comprising over 95,000 officers and other ranks capitulated along with arms before the Indian Command.

However, they pinned their faith on the young Pakistani officers who were said to have taken a vow to avenge the 1972 defeat and

were since then itching for a direct or 'proxy' war with India.

These young Pakistani officers would like tc follow the plan of General Ayub Khan who in 1965 had tried to infiltrate Pakistani armed personnel in mufti across the boundary into the Valley to turn the Kashmiris into quislings. But it did not succeed then because the people were not ready for it.

This time, however, the situation was more conductive to Pak plans. Hence the Head of State and the Supreme Commander of Pakistan Armed Forces, General Zia-ul-Haq put the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan army on the task of preparing a viable plan for waging a potent and serious 'proxy' war against India while keeping Pakistan officially out of it.

The Pakistani agents who entered the Valley in different garbs found conditions favourable for the success of their plan. Most of the urban youth were disgruntled with the government of the National Conference and were ready to join them.

The report from his ISI agents elated General Zia-ul-Haq. He is reported to have observed: "Our Kashmiri brethren in the Valley though with us in their hearts and minds, are simple-minded folk who do not take to the type of warfare which say a Punjabi or an Afghan takes to naturally." "The Kashmiri", he observed, "had a few qualities which we could exploit. First his shrewdness and intelligence, second his power to persevere under pressure, and the third, if I may say so, his being a master of political intrigue."

He thus paid a left-handed compliment to the Kashmiris almost in terms recorded by Abul Fazai who, referring to the Valley wrote: "The bane of this country is its people most of whom are faithless, cunning, opportunistic and obsequious."

The 'Proxy' War

But how to equip and train them in the use of sophisticated weapons? The problem was solved by the US-organised rebellion against the Russian forces in Afghanistan. A stream of highly sophisticated arms was channelled through Pakistan to Afghanistan. According to some observers up to 30 per cent of these arms was diverted, a substantial part of which found its way to Kashmir. Over 11,000 AK series of assault rifles alone, apart from other arms — sufficient to equip two infantry divisions — have been seized by the Indian security forces over the past few years. Much more has probably been cached.

The ISI thenceforth began to recruit hundreds of Kashmiri youth and arranged their crossing the line of actual control. Training camps were set up for them in Pakistan, PoK, Peshawar, etc.

After a short and intensive training they were equipped with arms, ammunition and cash and sent back to the Valley under the unsuspecting eye of the Indian Border Security Force.

General Zia's comprehensive plan was a two pronged operation. The first was to be carried out by the Kashmiri militants in the Valley and the other by the anti-India lobbyists from India and abroad.

The objective of the militant wing was to overwhelm the Indian security pickets in the Valley, destroy or capture vital Indian installations like post and telegraph offices, radio and television stations, airfields, government offices and educational institutions and most important of all to cleanse the Valley of the minority community of Kashmiri Pandits and other Hindus and Sikhs.

Members of the Indian wing were not to wield guns and pistols but work surreptitiously as writers, newspersons, speakers and propagandists. Their *modus operandi* was to write tendentious articles and news stories, hold seminars about India's denial of the right of self-determination to Kashmiri Muslims and to mount a sustained propaganda campaign about the so-called 'excesses' being perpetrated by India's security forces upon innocent people of Kashmir.

Moreover the wing had to conduct a whispering campaign about 'Azadi' or 'Freedom from India' being round the corner. The wing had to highlight the pullout of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the student agitation in China for revocation of communist rule, the reunification of East and West Germany and the break-up of the Soviet Union in Europe and Russia. Doordarshan and BBC's lavish telecasts of these separatist movements had to be mentioned as proof of their assertions.

And when the conditions were ripe, the terrorists had to begin their activities by first "putting the fish into water to test the temperature", The reactions of the State and Central governments were to be carefully watched and assessed.

To the joy of the militants the reactions to their activities from both the governments were encouraging. During the brief period of six years after Sheikh Abdullah's death in 1982, the reins of office remained in his family. First his son Farooq Abdullah to whom the governor, B.K.Nehru administered the oath of office as Chief Minister

stayed on for two years when his brother-in-law Ghulam Mohammed Shah after a split in the ruling National Conference party, replaced him. But failing to uphold law and order he was dismissed in March 1986 and the Governor's rule imposed. Six months later Farooq prevailed upon Rajiv Gandhi to reinstall him as Chief Minister with the promise of forming a Congress-National Conference coalition government.

Farooq Abdullah's first stint as Chief Minister of the state was a windfall to the ISI and its mentors in Pakistan. His anti-India stance substantially helped to convert the fence-sitters to the ideas propagated by the militants. No effective steps were taken to crush insurgency and restore people's confidence in his government.

On the contrary he tried to consolidate the Valley as a Muslim majority area to be ultimately formed as an independent country. He entered into an agreement with Mir Waiz Maulvi Farooq. Thus a reunion of the two factions after 40 years of bitter opposition was, as Farooq Abdullah proclaimed, his great achievement.

Thereupon began his vehement tirade against the Centre. By this game he thought he would kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand he would seal the mouth of Jamat-i-Islami and on the other proclaim his fearlessness in fighting for autonomy of Kashmir.

Meanwhile the activities of the terrorists were increasing in vehemence. There were regular bomb blasts and grenade attacks on the police pickets. The intelligence agencies sent reports to Delhi that unless Farooq Abdullah's activities were curbed there was a danger of the complete breakdown of the administrative machinery.

Mrs Gandhi transferred the Governor, B.K. Nehru to Gujarat and appointed Jagmohan, the former Lieutenant Governor of Delhi in his place. There was a bitter feud going on in Sheikh Abdullah's family when his son-in-law Ghulam Mohammed Shah with support of one third members of the State Assembly staked his claim to form the government.

This split in the National Conference Party reduced Farooq's government to minority. The Governor dismissed him and appointed Shah the leader of the splinter group as Chief Minister.

But with the change in government the law and order situation took a turn for the worse. There was hardly a day when curfew was not imposed in one part of the Valley or the other.

Finally to regain the support of the Muslims, Shah turned to the old strategem adopted by discredited leaders. He manipulated Muslim attacks on Hindus in the south of the Valley where several temples were torched and many more desecrated.

Farooq's Second Stint

Meanwhile Farooq Abdullah deprived of power had mellowed down and sought to befriend Rajiv Gandhi who had been returned to power on the death of his mother. Rajiv Gandhi was taken in by Farooq's expression of personal loyalty to him and the prospect of a National Conference-Congress-coalition Government in the State.

The intelligence agencies sent scathing reports about the disorders in the State and G.M.Shah's inability to control them. Jagmohan was obliged to dismiss him on 7 March 1986, and take over the administration into his own hands. During six months of his direct rule, things began to improve. He took a keen interest in the developmental works, the execution of which he supervised personally.

It, however, took nearly three months or more for the plan to install a popular government as envisaged by Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah and when the latter was sworn in as the head of a coalition Government on 7 November, 1986, it was a shocking experience for both the Central and State leaders to witness the complete breakdown of the State administration.

For, during the previous year and particularly the last three months the terrorist activities in the Valley had taken a heavy toll of life and property. Hundreds of Kashmiri youths trained in the use of sophisticated weapons and guerrilla warfare were posted by ISI in the Valley. They indulged in bomb and grenade attacks on security forces and government buildings. Several police personnel suffered grievous injuries and a number of civilians too lost their lives.

The entire socio-political scenario had assumed a ferocious look. It was dominated by militancy. The youth had taken to the cult of the gun and were harboured and encouraged in this adventure by the people in general. A phenomenon so sudden and disquieting bode ill for the people of Kashmir.

The years 1988 and 1989 were worse. It is estimated that by late 1989, over 5,000 Kashmiris received arms training in Pakistan. There were frequent *bandhs,* processions of men and women marching to UN Observers' office in Srinagar to hand over Memoranda of their

grievances to the staff. It was under the very nose of the Farooq government that truck-loads of young Kashmiris crossed over to Pakistan to get themselves enlisted as terrorists, get training in the use of arms and return fully equipped with arms and ammunition. Their activities naturally resulted in the economic loss both to the people and the government. The tourist trade and its infrastructure registered massive losses. The Valley was going the Beirut way. While the Valley's economic, political, social and cultural woes were taking it towards destruction, K.V. Krishna Rao replaced Jagmohan as the new governor of the State on 11 July 1989.

At this mild gesture from the Centre the terrorists became bolder and it was in his time that a prominent lawyer Tikalal Tapiloo, who was also the head of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Kashmir was killed in broad daylight. Later Nila Kanth Ganju the judge who had signed the death warrant of Maqbool Bhat was gunned down at Amira Kadal Chowk. Several more members of the Pandit community were killed outright or abducted and later gunned down.

The kidnapping of Dr Rubayya Sayid, daughter of the Home Minister on 8 December, 1989 gave a new turn to the already deteriorating condition in the Valley. The entire Government of India was stirred to action to ensure her early release. But the terms as dictated by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, the militant outfit directing the Independent Kashmir movement, were very harsh. They demanded the release of their five hardcore terrorists in exchange for her release. Farooq accepted their terms and the terrorists were set free.

There was spontaneous jubilation among the people who equated this with the final victory of their cause. The morale of the terrorists received a boost. Endless processions of anti-India demonstrators were taken out. Simultaneously there were numerous bomb blasts, grenade attacks and AK 47 rifle encounters with security forces and torching of sensitive targets as bridges, government offices and communication centres. School buildings were damaged and many Hindu temples and shrines desecrated.

It was in view of this deteriorating situation that the Governor K.V.Krishna Rao was replaced by Jagmohan on 17 January, 1990. This appointment irked Farooq Abdullah and he resigned as Chief Minister.

Jagmohan Saves Kashmir for India

Jagmohan immediately dissolved the assembly, for the members had become irrelevant at that moment. They were in mortal fear of the terrorists whose number had by now increased to 15,000.

When Jagmohan took over as the governor of the State he found the situation very grim. On every housetop fluttered either JKLF or Pakistani flag, and the streets were ehoeing the chant "We want Azadi". No Kashmiri Pandit dared to come out of his home and the government offices, banks, schools and colleges remained closed in response to the JKLF call for an indefinite *Bandh*.

The JKLF had planned to declare Kashmir as an Islamic Republic on the occasion of the Indian Republic Day in the presence of foreign journalists invited specially on this occasion.

Things were going according to President Zia's plan. Whereas Pakistani flags were fluttering over the rooftops all over the Valley, the government handouts from the Centre and writings in the press were lulling the Indian public to sleep with the chant — "All quiet on the Kashmir front."

All of a sudden there was a change on both the fronts. In the Valley Jagmohan was busy in bringing down the flags from the house-tops and controlling the surging procession on the streets. He clamped a curfew in the Valley disallowing any procession or rally on the Republic Day.

In the rest of the country the people were being aroused from their stupor by the cries and wailings of the surging crowds of migrants from the Valley seeking refuge in Jammu, Delhi and other parts of India.

Migration of Pandits

They were hounded out of their homeland by the Islamic Fundamentalists who receiving unlimited financial and arms aid from Pakistan and Arab countries, were actively working in the Valley. The Kashmiris were being told that their freedom was now round the corner. The only bloc to its achievement was the Kashmiri Pandits who had to either be eliminated or forced to leave Kashmir, the sooner the better.

Every mosque, and there are thousands of them all over the Valley, was fitted with a high volumed public address system. Pre-recorded cassettes with threatening slogans and cries of *Jehad*

Pathetic was the condition of the migrants living in tattered tents where they were given a shameful dole. It was the philanthropic people of Jammu who not only gave them shelter but looked after their bare needs. BJP and other philanthropic bodies also came to their rescue.

But it was through their own efforts that the community remained not only alive but with their intelligence and the power of their pen they made themselves audible all over the world. It is hoped that in a few years they will be in a position to demand and get back their homeland in Kashmir where they have been living for the last 10,000 years.

General (Rtd) K.V.Krishna Rao Again

Seeing no improvement in the situation in Kashmir and being subjected to arm-twisting by Anglo-American bloc on the so-called "violation of human rights" by the security forces, the young Minister of Internal Security, Rajesh Pilot, succeeded in having Girish Saxena replaced by the still milder Krishna Rao. Having once experienced his inefficient handling of the situation, people both at the Centre and the State have little hope of any improvement. But now that the army and BSF have been entrusted with the task of ridding the Valley of militancy in all aspects, one hopes things will improve — of course on condition there is no uncalled for interference from the Centre.

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CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

The modern period in Kashmir beginning with the advent of Sikh rule in 1819, ushered in an era of comparative peace, though there was political and economic suppression during the earlier stages. With a freer intercourse between the Valley and the Punjab, literature and art were again marked with influences from the south rather than the north-east — Afghanistan and Persia.

Persian, however, continued to be the court language for over a century more and we find several Persian scholars and poets in Kashmir attaining distinction.

Persian

One of the earliest poets in Persian was Mulla Baha-ud-din *Baha* (1766—1832 AD) who produced a *Khamsa* comprising *Rishi-nama, Sultani, Ghausiya, Naqashbandiya, and Chishtiya.* Baha's contemporary, Mulla Hamidullah, has given us a fascinatingly humorous poem, the *Chai-nama* in imitation of Zahuri's *Saqi-nama.*

Give me tea, O Saqi, and let there be no delay ;
Let me have it bitter, if milk and sugar are not to hand.
Had Jamshid taken a draught from this pot,
His slow beating pulse would have run like a deer.

Mirza Mahdi *Mujrim* (d. 1856) was well-known poet and has been compared by several critics to Ghani on account of his forceful expression. Another Kashmiri poet in Persian during this period was Khwaja Hasan *Shiri,* of the family of Inayatullah Khan a former governor of the Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah. Born in 1808 AD *Shiri* migrated to the Punjab during the Sikh rule and thence went to Delhi where he had poetical contests with Mirza Ghalib.

The most popular poet in Persian during the early Dogra rule

was Mirza *Mahdi* who besides being a learned scholar was also a poet of eminence. Given to fits of insanity, *Mahdi* composed couplets which at once convey praise and blame, eulogy and censure.

Of all the Kashmiri poets in Persian who lived in the rest of India, the name of Sir Mohammed Iqbal stands preeminent. His poetry is well known to require any comments or introduction here.

Among the Kashmiri Hindus who acquired fame as poets in Persian during this period may be mentioned Raj Kaul Arzbegi *Dairi,* Shankar Ju Akhun *Girami,* Tabah Ram *Turki. Dairi* flourished in the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Iranians coming to Kashmir were delighted to meet him and to listen to his poems and other compositions in Persian. Pandit Raja Kak Dhar *Farukh* was also a poet of note.

Diwan Kirpa Ram's *Gulab-nama* is perhaps one of the best biographical works in Persian. Written in high-flown style, it gives every detail of the life Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of Jammu and Kashmir State.

Sanskrit

Sanskrit, however, continued to recede to the background, though Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried his best to revive its study. He founded Sanskrit *pathshalas* and employed proficient Pandits to teach Sanskrit. He set up a translation bureau where Sanskrit texts were edited and sometimes translated into Persian, Hindi and Dogri. Sahib Ram, a noted Sanskrit scholar wrote his *Tirtha Sangraha* giving the legends and geographical description of the famous places of pilgrimage in Kashmir.

When in 1875, George Buhler visited Kashmir in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, he found the language popular with the Brahmins of Kashmir. Sanskrit learning, however, was not then as flourishing as during the earlier periods, but still there were some remnants of former glory. He met several Sanskrit scholars of the day, for example Pandit Daya Ram from whom Buhler says, "I obtained at once a great deal of valuable information." He also came in contact with Pandit Damodar, the Chief Pandit of the Maharaja's *Mudarissa.* Of this Pandit, Buhler says that he would be able to hold up his head anywhere. "His poetical compositions", says Buhler, "continuation of the *Rajatarangini,* and a letter-writer entitled *Praudalekha* which he was good enough to read and to explain to me for hours — certainly

surpass Sri Harsha and Bana, and can be only compared to Subandhu's *Vasavadatta*". Bhuler came in contact with other Pandits deeply learned in Sanskrit, notable being Govind Kaul and Damodar Jotshi. He found 22 libraries of Sanskrit manuscripts still extant in Srinagar.

Sanskrit literature produced in Kashmir during ancient times attracted the attention of several Indian and European scholars. The State Government established a Research Department, where many Sanskrit texts were edited, collated and published. The Pandits who laboured on these included Mahamahopadyaya Mukund Ram Sastri, Pandit Hara Bhat Sastri, Pandit Jagadhar Zadu and Pandit Madhusudan Kaul. The latter, a great research scholar, edited with critical annotations and comments Abhinavagupta's *Tantralok* and other texts, which won him recognition and fame among Sanskrit scholars of the world.

Kashmiri

Kashmiri literature of the modern period starting with the beginning of the 19th century, was in the early stages dominated by Persian influences, Persian being the court language and the medium of polite literature. Both with regard to metre and language, the Kashmiri writers followed the models set by Persian poets and litterateurs. This had its advantage as well as drawbacks. Whereas the Kashmiri language benefited from the importation of words and idioms of this sweet language, it suffered from wholesale borrowings by the poets of the time, of not only epithets and phrases, but also "hackneyed imagery and figures of speech, conceits and insincere hyperbole of decadent Persian poetry." But often the Kashmiri poets strike an original conceit and breaking away from tradition describe a scene, or battle in words and phrases which can be called peculiarly Kashmiri. The themes which the Kashmiri poet turns to are typically Persian — the story of Laila and Majnun, of Shirin and Khusro and of Soharb and Rustam.

From 1819 to 1880 when Parmanand died, productions in Kashmiri were both rich and prolific. To this period we owe the epics like the *Ramayana* by Prakash Ram, romances like *Shirin Khusro* by Mahmud Gami, *Gulrez* by Maqbool Shah Kralawari, tragedies like *Akanandun* and *Himal ta Nagray* by Walliullah and Saif-ud-din. Parmanand's rendering of Puranic and epic episodes like *Shiv-lagan* and *Sudama Charitra,* and numerous *ghazals* and ballads also come in

the same period.

One of the earliest poets whose works follow the Persian metre, imagery and theme, was Mahmud Gami. Born in the village of Duru, near Verinag, Mahmud Gami was a prolific writer and produced in Kashmiri the *Panchganj*, that is, the five well-known romances like *Yusuf Zulaikha*, *Laila-Majnun* and *Shirin-Khusro*. He has to his credit numerous *ghazals*, and other poems. His diction and description of battle scenes are virile and graphic. Though he uses Persian construction, he has a true poetic quality of passion:

I asked of the butcher the meaning of love's art.
He said "Tie thy heart with the fork of Love.
It is the heat that makes the roasted meat taste better."

Prakash Ram of Kurigam village who lived during the time of the Afghan governor Raja Sukh Jiwan (1754-62), has given us the *Rama Avtar-chrita* in Kashmiri. The simple metre, smooth flow and description of typical Kashmiri landscape — flowers, seasons and dress of the people — make his great work delightful reading. True, there is a large number of Persian words and idioms, but the whole work is typically Kashmiri. Sita wears a *phiran* and *taranga*, the Dandaka forest is full of deodar, pine and poplar, Ravana's garden has beds of Kashmiri flowers, and the food of King Dasaratha and his court is rice and other Kashmiri vegetables. The numerous gods and goddesses who attend the marriage of Rama and Sita, have their abodes in the *tirthas* of Kashmir.

Similar pictures and descriptive passages are to be found in the works of Maqbool Shah Kralawari. Though the theme of his immortal metrical romance *Gulrez* is Persian,. the scene is typically Kashmiri. He has also given us a frank satire on a Kashmiri farmer in his *Gruistnama*. Born in a village north of Srinagar, Maqbool Shah followed the calling of a priest and thus came in close contact with the peasants. An idea of the miserable conditions in which the peasant lived in his time, over a hundred years ago, can be had from his famous satire:

Thrashings, verily, have been ordained by Heavens for the peasant;

Pull out the shoe and strike him on the head.

In a revealing piece, Maqbool depicts the peasants rushing out to greet a petty official, *Sazawal*, with pretended warmth:

If the *Sazawal* comes across them they run to greet him;

They would knock away his fatigue with closed fists, shampoo his limbs and offer him a seat upon their heads.

In the field of lyrical poetry we find that Maqbool made a great name. He breathes freshness in his description of the Kashmir spring:

The trips to the Dal [Lake] have started in right earnest;
The Shalamar [Garden] is in full bloom!
Pray call the friend of my youth to me today!

And he reveals the poignancy which overwhelms a frustrated lover's heart:

My youth was a half-awakened bud;
it fell off for his love.
Wanton and proud is he ; thence have I,
and Beauty turned into dust.

Rasool Mir, born in Shahabad, was in fact a pioneer in maintaining the chastity of the Kashmiri language. His style is simple, direct and easily intelligible. His verses are sweet and charming. He is regarded as the father of Kashmiri *ghazal*, running in a well-knit form and pattern so distinct from the Parsian and Urdu *ghazal*.

His lyrics are on the human plane, but he also wrote several mystical poems. His mysticism did not, however, prevent him from writing poems which show that he was sick of idleness and believed that progress of man was possible only by struggle and hard work:

Crave not for pearls while thou art on the shore,
Dive deep into the depths of the sea,
Make garlands of jewels and weave wreaths of pearls.

Parmanand has left a deep stamp of his mystic and humane thought on Kashmiri poetry, unsurpassed by any writer since. Born at Mattan near Anantnag in 1791 AD he lived to a ripe old age of 88, but his life was saddened by the death of his only son, and the naggings of his shrewish wife. He was, however, a saint and mystic and while performing the duties of a *patwari* of the village as a means of earning the barest livelihood, he seems to have devoted his heart and soul to 'other worldly' affairs. He would meet religious mendicants who halted at Mattan for a few days while on their way to the cave of Amarnath. He listened to their discourses, and studied the broad principles of Vedanta. He came in contact with a Muslim mystic, Wahab Sahib, and listened to the recitations of the *Granth Sahib* at the Sikh *Gurdwara* at Mattan.

His poems are mainly religious and philosophical in theme. He is, however, less mystical and obscure than his great predecessor, Lalleswari. He is less musical, familiar and realistic than his proximate successor, Pandit Krishanji Razdan and his own disciple Pandit Laksmanji of Nagam, but he is far profounder than either. He is more accurate in the technique of versification than some of his contemporaries and predecessors.

The best-known works of Parmanand are *Sudama Charitra*, *Radha Swayamwar*, and *Shiv-lagan*. Thoroughly permeated with the teachings of Kashmir Saivism, his poems give a true interpretation of the philosophy, namely, that the Universe exists; it is real, good; it is *leela*, a dance of Siva. One must only know how to live and enjoy this real life:

To die while one is alive is excellent sport.
It is meditation on one's self;
The contemplation of the Self apart from Ego.

The tradition of mystical verse was maintained by Aziz Darvesh. Wahab Khar, Mirza Kak and a number of known and unknown poets, but we notice a change in the idiom and phrase. We also find in this period the emergence of the *Rov* poems, turned to the rhythmic dance of the Kashmiri women. The socio-economic conditions of the time which bore heavily upon the people, produced the comic-satiric ballad, called 'Lari Shah', expressing the Kashmiri's satiric humour.

By the end of the 19th century Kashmiri poetry had touched on all the themes and variations in metre and imagery. We have, for instance, the works of Abdul Wahab Pare which besides some didactic and devotional pieces, are mainly devoted to translations into chaste Kashmiri verse of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. In his *Akbarnama* he gives an epical versified account of the first three Afghan wars.

Abdul Wahab Pare, born at Hajin in 1845, was a prolific writer. His works embrace religious, didactic, satiric and amorous poems. His mystic poems have, however, been much appreciated, and his satiric odes are popular with the masses.

Ramzan Bhatt of Dharamunah village near Badgam, gave to the rich Kashmiri literature his immortal ballad, *Akanandun* (literally the only son) the Kashmiri version of the Issac and Abraham story, which is very popular with its keen, cruel pathos and devotional zeal. How forceful is the verse when the Sadhu appears to demand the life of the boy in fulfilment of a vow:

O Woman ! where is thy Akanandun ?
Looking so bright among his classmates ?
If you have the heart,
Offer him in sacrifice today.

And how grim the murder scene:

Mother Ratna caught him by the hands and feet,
Crying, O God, my God, O how cruel !

His own father did cut his throat.

Akanandun is divided into seven parts. It is popular in the countryside. Though several poets including Ahad Zargar, Samad Mir and Ali Wani attempted to versify the story, none could reach the lucidity and clarity which Ramzan Bhatt was able to achieve.

Towards the end of the 19th century some notable contributions were made to the Kashmiri literature by European missionaries who in order to come closer to the people learnt their language. Particularly notable is Rev. T.R. Wade who compiled a Kashmiri grammar and translated the New Testament into Kashmiri. Rev. J.Hinton Knowles collected a number of Kashmiri proverbs and riddles and published them along with English translations and notes and comments. Some additions to these were later published by Pandit Anand Koul in the *Indian Antiquary*. Knowles also published a collection of Kashmiri folk-tales in English. Another collection of folk-tales was published under the title *Hatim's Tales* by Sir Aurel Stein and Sir George Grierson. Sir George also translated from Sanskrit the Kashmiri grammar by Pandit Iswar Kaul. A Kashmiri-Sanskrit Dictionary by the same author was utilised by Sir George in the preparation of his Kashmiri-English Dictionary, published in 1932 by the Royal Asiatic Society.

The beginning of the 20th century found the Kashmiri literature in a state of stupor. The reason was not far to seek. The court language which had for centuries been Persian was suddenly changed to Urdu. There developed a keen desire among the middle classes to acquire a knowledge of Urdu and of the newly introduced English language. Kashmiri which had till then received inspiration from Persian was thrust into the background.

But with increasing literacy in Urdu and English, there grew a demand for literature that the masses could easily understand. The interest that the publication of Lalleswari's sayings in 1920 aroused in Europe encouraged the young writers in Kashmir to devote more

attention to their mother tongue. But times had now changed and the theme and form of the Kashmiri poetry required accordingly to be modified. That the new generation of Kashmiri poets did not ignore the modern trends is amply shown in the works of Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur who ushered in a new era in the cultural history of Kashmir.

Born in a middle class family of Pirs at the village of Matrigam in 1888, Mahjur had education in Persian and Arabic in a *muktab*. Early in his youth he had an opportunity of travelling in the Punjab where he came in contact with writers and poets and this created in him a desire to compose poetry. He made the first attempts in this direction in Urdu, but this did not come up to his standard.

His profession as a *patwari* brought him in close touch with the village folk. Their hopes and fears, their simple life and the hardships and miseries that they had to undergo in earning a meal for themselves and their children touched the chords of his sympathetic heart. In his simple Kashmiri verse, he voiced the inner feelings of the rustic and exhorted him to rise and work for his emancipation :

If thou wouldst rouse this habitat of roses,
Leave toying with kettle-drums
Let there be thunder-storm and tempest, aye an earthquake.

In his early poems Love predominates. But it is not the love of the rich, or of the tavern: it is of simple folk like a country lass. His poems too have a patriotic fervour and of the glory that was Kashmir. In his poem 'Our Country is a Garden' he describes the beauty of the Valley and relates some of the achievements of the Kashmiris in the past. He is a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity. To him Kashmir is a place where tolerance and communal amity are enshrined in the hearts of the people.

Hindus will keep the helm and Muslims ply the oars;
Let you together row ashore the boat of this country.

Mahjur was followed in his new themes and revolutionary ideas by Abdul Ahad Azad. Born of poor parents in a village called Rangar in 1903 AD, Azad was brought up like other village lads and was taught the Quran and a few books in Persian. Later he studied Urdu. Azad was much influenced by his father's mysticism and his recitations from Maulana Rum.

His early compositions are typical of those produced by Mahjur. But as he gained maturity, he enunciated the ways and means of attaining freedom from want and misery. Mahjur was a nationalist, but

Azad longed for a socialistic pattern of society, for a new era of equality. The one looked to the past, the other to the future:

To become free, to end tyranny and to abolish superstition,
This is my cherished dream, this my desire and this slogan.

Azad was a literary critic also and compiled a history of Kashmiri literature in Urdu.

Pandit Zinda Kaul, popularly known as 'Masterji', took to writing poems in Kashmiri at a late stage in his life. With his simplicity of habits and nobility of thought 'Masterji' was loved and respected by all the people of Kashmir. His poems are mystical, deeply devotional and patriotic. He employs new rhyme-schemes and rhythm pattens. His poems 'Vadihe Manush' and 'Natayoeri' are not only rich in content but in incantation and beautiful imagery as well.

Man — momently dying:

By hunger, cold and thirst oppressed,
By disease distressed, by worry harassed,
By fear and want and woe subdued,
These sorrows over, by a hundred desires beguiled,
His unsteady mind, nor finding rest in anything here,
Still craves for a something unknown.

Masterji's lofty thought and rich imagery and the use of short and apt words and idioms, won recognition, and in 1955 the Sahitya Academy honoured him with an award for a collection of his poems entitled *Sumran.*

Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg in his poem 'Kashmiri Craftsman' has touched a new theme, depicting the poverty and want of the producer of the beautiful handicrafts of Kashmir. His chief contribution is the *Rub'ai,* full of his peculiar wit and irony.

Kashmiri literature is deficient in prose and during the past few decades attempts have been made to write plays and short stories. The earliest play in Kashmiri was *Satach Kahwat* by Nand Lal Kaul. Many 'social reform' plays have been produced and during the Pakistan-inspired invasion of Kashmir, the members of the Cultural Front wrote and staged several plays depicting the basic principles for which Kashmir was fighting a defensive war.

The Cultural Front gave an impetus to the resurgence in the field of art and literature. The leaders of the new movement were Dina Nath Nadim and Rahman Rahi. The latter has received an award from

the Sahitya Academy.

Dina Nath Nadim, a teacher by profession, rendered valuable service to Kashmiri by laying emphasis on prose. His essays and short stories published in *Kwang Posh,* a journal in Kashmiri, have laid a pattern which is being profitably followed by other young writers.

Among the new writers in Kashmiri may be mentioned Nand Lal Ambardar, Amin Kamil, Ghulam Ahmed *Mushtaq,* Pitambar Nath Dhar, Prem Nath *Premi,* Avtar Kishan *Rahbar* and Dina Nath *Almast. Hairat* Pandani, an elderly writer and a Persian poet and scholar, attempted to produce verses in Kashmiri as well.

The beginning of the 20th century also witnessed the emergence of Kashmiri authors who wrote in English. Foremost among them was Pandit Anand Koul who was one of the first few Kashmiris to learn English. He was associated early with Rev. Hinton Knowles in compiling the Dictionary of Kashmiri proverbs and riddles. Born in 1867, he studied Persian and Sanskrit and with his knowledge of English rose quickly to become the first President of the Srinagar Municipality. His interest in the history and literature of Kashmir never flagged and his books *Jammu and Kashmir State,* the *Kashmiri Pandit, Archaeological Remains in Kashmir* and *Lalla-Yogeshwari* are standard works on the subject. He also contributed extensively to research papers and journals in India and abroad on Kashmir history, folklore and literature.

Among other Kashmirian writers in English may be mentioned Ramchandra Kak, Jia Lal Kaul, Prem Nath Bazaz and Jia Lal Raina.

There are some Kashmiri writers in Urdu who have received recognition and fame. The foremost are Pandit Nand Lal Kaul *Talib* and Pandit Dina Nath Chikan *Mast.* Among other poets in Urdu may be mentioned Kamal-ud-din *Shaida,* Ghulam Rasool *Nazki,* Dina Nath *Dilgir, Shahzor* Kashmiri, Abdul Ahad *Barq,* and Nur Mohammad *Roshan.* Prem Nath *Pardesi* was a prolific writer in Urdu prose and Prem Nath Dhar wrote a few short stories. Abdul Rehman Rahi and Som Nath Zutshi have also written a number of short stories in Urdu.

Painting

In the field of art, Kashmir is not lagging behind. The Amar Singh Technical Institute, established at Srinagar in 1910, was responsible for creating among a few youngmen a taste for Painting. But it was

after 1931 due to the political upsurge that we find a number of artists coming into prominence. Dina Nath Wali's landscapes have been appreciated widely. Trilok Kaul and Ghulam Rasool Santosh have held exhibitions of their paintings in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta and have received a good reception at the hands of art critics. P.N. Kachru, S.N. Butt, Mohan Lal Raina and Bansi Parimoo are artists of note.

In the field of architecture there is not much of note. Except for the new temple architecture of the Dogras who built the Raghunath temple at Jammu and several temples in Kashmir, most of the building activities were confined to the repairs and renovations of old monuments and Mughal gardens. Under the inspiration of the British tourists and officials, several bungalows of the English villa type were built. This introduced a new trend in the building art and we thus find a curious blend of the Muslim arch and the English steeple in some of the buildings in Srinagar.

With the establishment of popular government in 1947, there has been a palpable resurgence in the field of art and culture. The Cultural Academy is doing yoeman's service in reviving the cultural traditions and encouraging the growth and proliferation of new ideas and themes.

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P.N.K. Bamzai, born in 1910 in a Kashmiri Pandit Family of scholarly traditions, received his first lessons in historical research from his father, Pandit Anand Koul who was the pioneer of modern research on the history and folklore of Kashmir.

He got his degree from the Panjab University. His articles and papers pertaining to the history of Kashmir have been published in several journals in India and abroad. Besides writing several books on the subject, he has to his credit the monumental work, *A History of Kashmir* which carries a foreword by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

In 1954 he joined the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, as Editor of the illustrated *Kashmir*, which post he had graced for six years. He has been Editor of almost all the journals published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Subsequently he was deputed by the Government of India to work as Adviser (Publication) to the Government of Ethiopia.

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